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Number 65

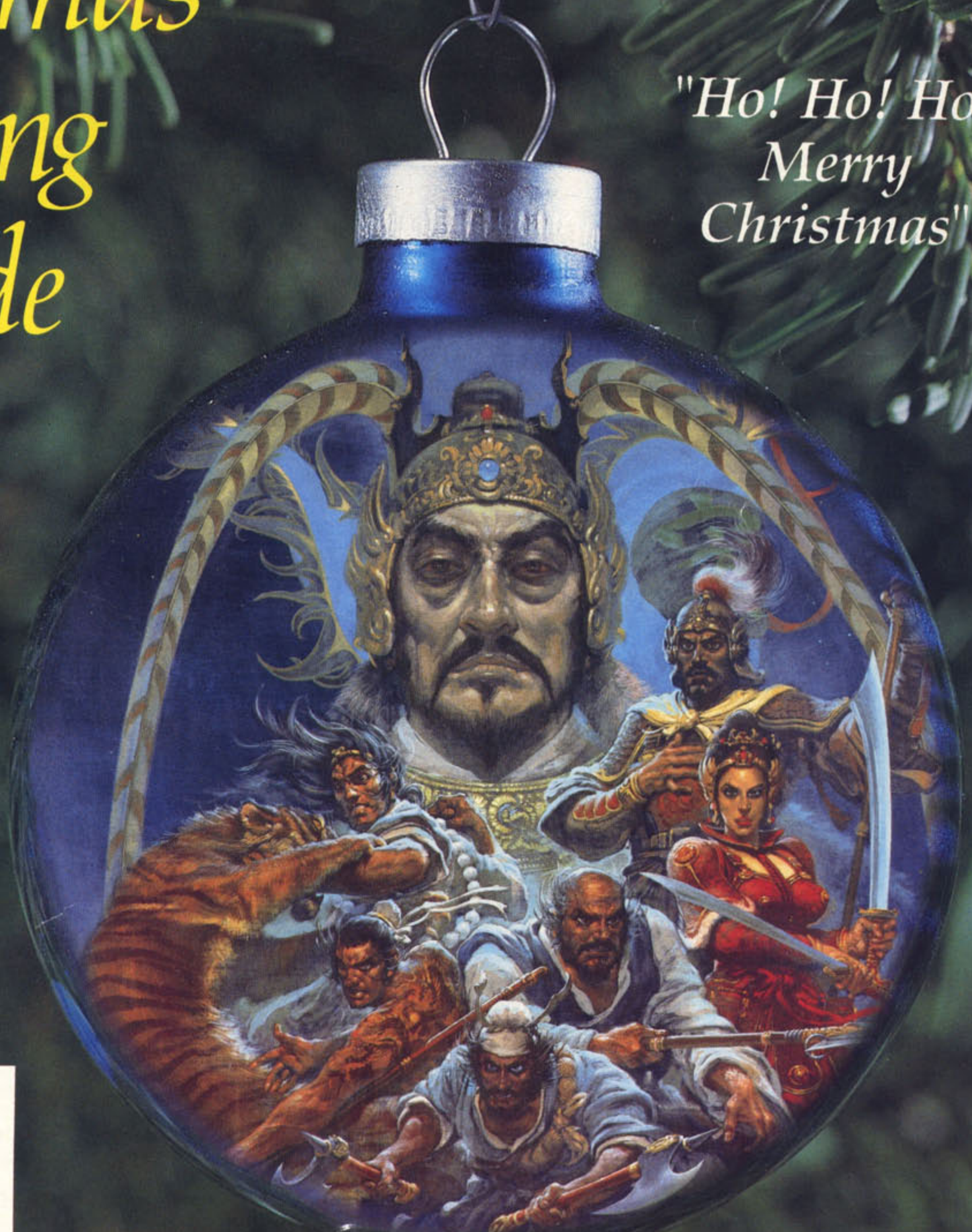
November 1989

Sword of Aragon • F-15 Strike Eagle II • Omni-Play Basketball

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

Christmas Buying Guide

"Ho! Ho! Ho! Merry Christmas"



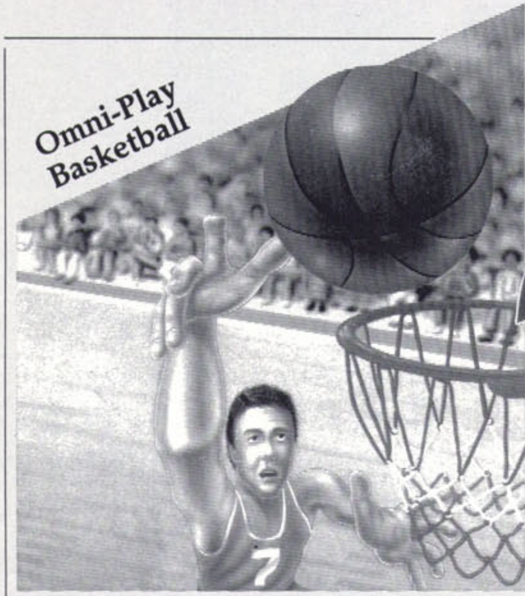
Koei's Bandit Kings of Ancient China

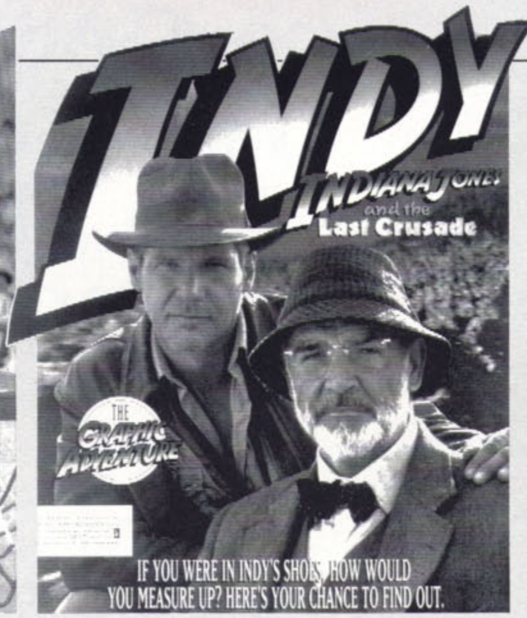
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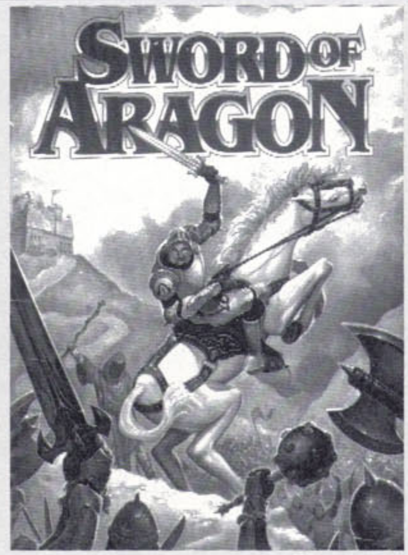
COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

Covering the World of Computer Games For Eight Years

November 1989 **Number 65**







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Features

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"Name The Game!" Contest Answers



Only nine perfect entries were received on our Name The Game Contest from CGW #63 (September). Five of the nine came from the Midwest, two from the East Coast, and two from foreign countries. Hey, all you laid back readers in the West, whut (sic) happened? Gerrie Adams, our lovely circulation manager, picked Paul Butler's entry out of a hat as the overall winner of a three year subscription to CGW. Paul is from Aberdeen Scotland. Thanks a lot Gerrie! Do you know how much postage a three year subscription to Scotland is going to set us back!? Oh well! Congratulations Paul!.

Ok, all you dudes in the West, lets make a better showing in our next contest coming up in November.

"Name The Game" Contest Answers

(See CGW #63, September, page 42 for the questions)

1. *Wayne Gretzky Hockey*
2. *Wings Of Fury*
3. *Typhoon of Steel*
4. *Knight Games*
5. *Modem Wars*
6. *Renegade*
7. *Might & Magic II*
8. *Rocket Ranger*
9. *Ultima V*
10. *Twilight Zone*
11. *Paladin*
12. *Carrier Command*

The Good, The Bad & The ? Uncertain

The State of the Industry: For many of us, there is an indelible image from the opening moments of the Academy Award winning film, "The Graduate". A party is being given for Dustin Hoffman's character, but his alienation from the value system of his parents is emphasized by a middle-aged businessman walking up to him and offering one word of advice, "Plastics". In the film, it is clear that Hoffman wants nothing to do with business/industry and that the very term strikes him as "plastic".

In today's computer entertainment industry, there is an old term with new spin which must be dealt with, "video games". Dedicated game machine technology is significantly impacting our world. **Epyx** will cease to be a "publisher" of disk-based computer entertainment at the end of 1989, focusing instead on "developing" software for dedicated game machines and incidentally, software for other companies. **Cinemaware**, as noted in last issue's "Rumor Bag", has become an Affiliated Label with **Electronic Arts Distribution**, in order to concentrate their attention on developing games for new technology and **NEC**'s *Turbo Grafx 16*. In addition, **Spectrum Holobyte** has already announced its plans for developing *Falcon* for the **Sega** *Genesis* machine.

Further, **Lucasfilm** is establishing a video games group in order to enter the **Nintendo** market. In an exclusive conversation with *CGW*, **Lucasfilm** sources indicated that, as of press time, substantive discussions were being held with **NEC** and "others". Also, **Electronic Arts**' "Initial Public Offering" specified that the largest portion of capital to be generated was for video game development. In a similar vein, inside sources at **Dynamix** guardedly admit that much of their current digitizing development is being conducted with an eye toward future CD-ROM products.

What does this mean for the sophisticated computer gamer? At first, gamers can expect to see the disk-based software publishers porting their best-selling designs into video game versions. This would be the most efficient way to enter the market. Eventually, however, one can expect to see original designs which take advantage of the improved graphic and memory capacities of the newer game systems. Then, the disk-based gamer could possibly find himself/herself in the same "pop" cultural backwater as the orphaned 8-bit owners of a few years back.

The State of the Magazine: To date, there really haven't been very many original video game products which merit the attention of *CGW*'s readership. However, and this is a big distinction, the renewed emphasis and influx of capital seems certain to change this. Therefore, we will pledge to be industry watchers. When changes occur, we will strive to monitor them and alert our readers to those changes which will impact them. As of press time, however, the future of disk-based entertainment software seems somewhat uncertain.

At present, the best course of action for our readers is to vote with your dollars. If sales figures for disk-based computer games seem soft, we can expect to see less and less *great* products on PCs in the future. If the challenging, deep, and high quality disk-based products sell particularly well, however, we can continue to expect publishers to support our machines in the future.

Special Announcement: *Dungeon Master*, winner of the 1988 Special Award for Artistic Achievement, has been inducted into the *CGW*'s Hall of Fame after a significant tenure at the top of the Reader Input Device ratings. See the listing on page 49.

FOUR COMPUTER HACKERS ARE ABOUT TO RAID YOUR DISK DRIVE.



No computer will go unscathed, as Ultra's version of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles® storms into your disk drive to duke it out with Shredder™—a maniac more menacing than an army of mind-altered Bruce Lees.

But if they're to survive, you must command the role of each turtle, rumbling through a maze of Mouser™ infested sewers, criminally polluted rivers and alleys patrolled by the fanatical Foot Clan.™

Along the way, search for bonus weapons like the Triple Shuriken. You'll have to also think fast, switching turtle identities in order to match their karate skills with those of the enemy.

So grab your joystick and nunchukus, then control every leap, chop, slice and dice, until you splatter Shredder senseless or get yourself hacked into turtle soup.

Now featuring the ULTRA® "GAME SAVE" command.



ULTRA® GAMES

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles is available for IBM, Commodore and Amiga.

Broderbund
17 Paul Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

WHERE IN TIME IS CARMEN SANDIEGO?: That slippery criminal genius, Carmen Sandiego, and her V.I.L.E. henchmen are on the prowl again. But you won't find them traipsing around the U.S., Europe, or the globe. At least not in this *time*. Carmen has stolen the secret of time travel and is now filching famous artifacts throughout history. Players track the criminals across the globe and over the centuries while investigating clues using the packaged copy of the "New American Desk Encyclopedia". A fun, educational, adventure package for all ages. IBM ($44.95). Circle Reader Service #1.

Advertisers



Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego



Midway



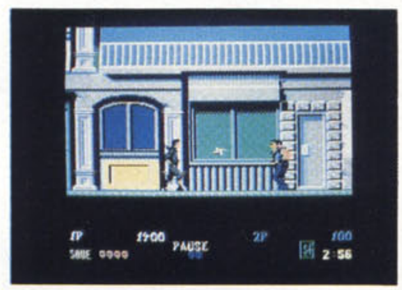
Prelude to Jutland



Indiana Jones Action Game



After Burner



Shinobi

General Quarters Software
28631 S. Western Ave., Suite 101
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90732

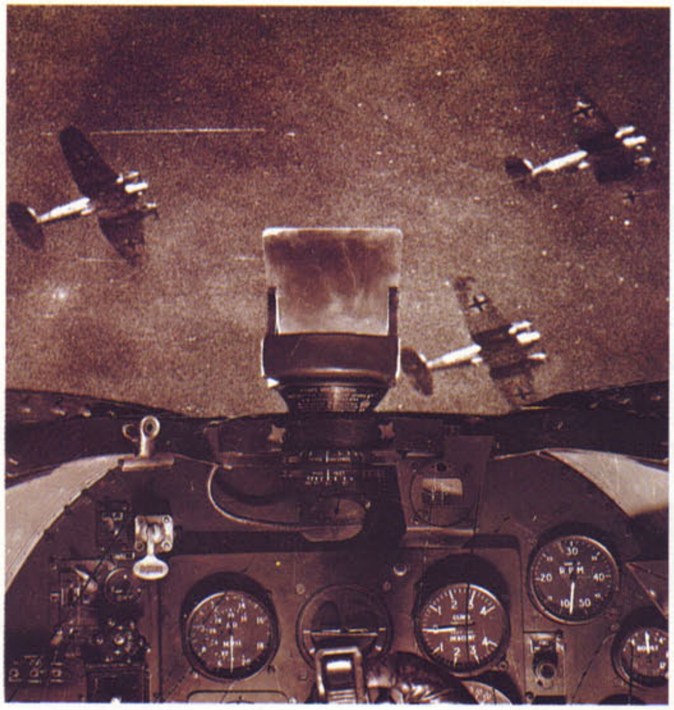
MIDWAY: This simulation of the WWII naval battle between the U.S. and Japan allows players to control either side or play solo as the Americans. The game contains several different initial Japanese deployments, thus increasing the challenge to the American player. IBM ($35.00). Circle Reader Service #2.

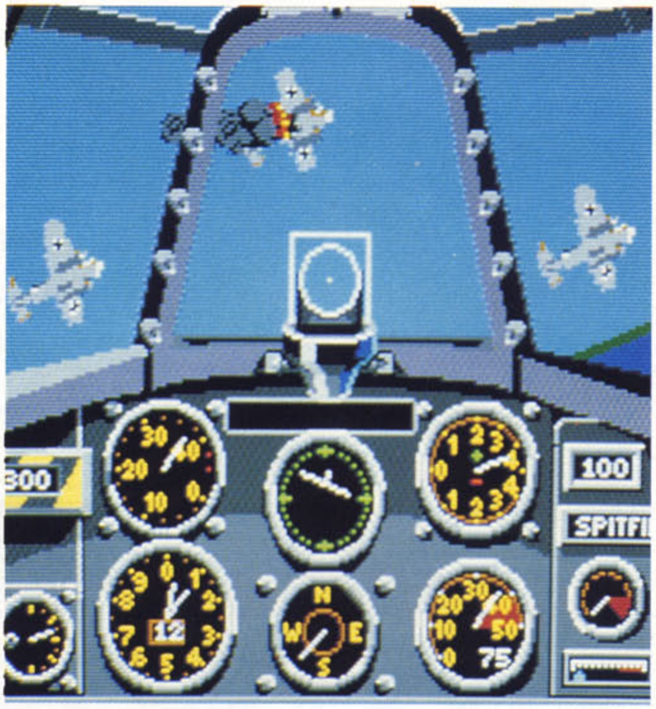
PRELUDE TO JUTLAND: Players get a chance to control the British interceptor fleet in this game of WWI battlecruiser action in the North Sea. With seven battlecruisers, augmented by light cruiser fleets and subs, the British must defend the British coastline and commercial sea interests against the marauding Germans. One or two players compete in this deadly game of "hide and seek". IBM ($35.00). Circle Reader Service #3.

Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404

INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE ACTION GAME: Players search a giant cavern looking for the Cross of Coronado, escape across a moving circus train, explore a Venetian catacomb looking for the Grail Knight's shield, scale the walls of Schloss Brunwald, dodge Nazis on a zeppelin, and survive the Grail Temple test (whew!) in

(Continued on page 92)





THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN. UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL.

One pilot described a World War II dogfight "like being on the inside of a beehive." And that's just what it feels like to play *Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain.*™ The new air combat simulator from Lucasfilm Games that's keeping simulation buffs and action gamers alike on the edge of their seats.

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From the moment you pull back on the throttle, *Their Finest Hour* grips you with near-photographic realism of aircraft, smoke, terrain, and flying debris.

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Want to show your friends how you erased that *Flying Pencil* with fancy deflection shooting? *Their Finest Hour* lets you save your proudest combat performances to disk. And relive them in real time, fast forward, or frame by frame.



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Take on the Luftwaffe in a tough little RAF Hurricane or fabled Spitfire. Or test your skills at the controls of the Spitfire's nemesis, the formidable Messerschmitt 109. Pulverize ground installations from your Messerschmitt 110 fighter/bomber or your screaming Stuka. Or fly as pilot, bombardier or gunner in a Junkers 88, Dornier Flying Pencil, or Heinkel Spade.

Your success in each mission impacts the next one: knock out a radar installation today, and you'll breathe easier tomorrow. Who knows—you might even change history. And if you don't like the odds, *Their Finest Hour* lets you change sides.

LUCASFILM™ GAMES





Please Release Me

This letter was posted to CGW *via the PRODIGY® interactive personal service.*

I read *CGW* and find it a good source of information. As an insider, can't you let us know what we can do as buyers of these games to get the software companies to be more realistic in their release dates. You may have heard this before, but it gets annoying. As a comic book fan, I experience the same thing with release dates on comics. What is it about marketing people that they have to push release dates that are not met. I could see it if it happened once in awhile, but it is now the norm for release dates to be a bunch of baloney!

I also realize that some of us in our quest for news about what is latest and greatest may cause some of the problem. This type of hype with no delivery or very late delivery has to hurt sales. It probably also leaves a bad taste in the mouths of people waiting forever for the likes of *Harpoon* and others. Sometimes I think the overhyping (if I may make up the word) leaves us wanting when we actually see the finished product. When we get it and boot up it is anticlimactic and we let ourselves in for a letdown because the anticipated product is better than the real thing. But, I digress. Again I ask, what can we all do to let the software people know that we want it to stop and that it is irritating to have to be subjected to this type of treatment which I feel shows a lack of concern for the buying public?

Thomas Del Conte
DHKJ71A

Ah, the release date question surfaces once more. During the last two years, CGW *has made a concerted effort to avoid announcing specific release dates in our editorial coverage. In artistic endeavors which involve teams of people and technical problem-solving, it is impossible to be absolutely certain as to when the project will be finished. Some parts of the project come together easier than others and designers/developers tend to build in benchmarks based on these optimal time frames rather than more realistic ones. We have tried to speak of seasonal releases rather than specific release dates, because most games which miss the projections do so by only a few weeks rather than a few months. An obvious exception is* Harpoon. *As the designers pointed out in CGW #62 pg. 42, there was a total replacement of the design team in mid project (a very rare occurence.).*

As for the marketing departments, they might be due something of a reprieve. The ad agencies and marketing departments must often coordinate an advertising campaign for a particular product six months to a year in advance. They must also commit to the space in the magazines a significant time in advance. Thus, they are victimized by the delay as much as the consumers. In fact, they may actually be hurt worse, because they are spending more money on promoting the product before they can possibly recoup any.

As for what consumers can do about the problem, there are limited options. Writing letters is certainly one way to get a company's attention. Refusing to pre-order products from companies with poor track records in terms of timely releases is a more emphatic way.

Degenerative Nerve

Concerning the game *Omnicron Conspiracy*, advertised in the July issue of your magazine, I cannot help but express the repugnance I felt on seeing the ills of society turned into a game. As an educated adult, I can see this type of thing for the offal it is; however, a younger person not yet possessing mature judgment in all probability would not.

Am I advocating the abridgement of your First Amendment rights by asking you to censor such trash? Absolutely not. Print what you like. I would say, however, that as advertising is intended to sway the judgment of your readers, then by the same token, I am entitled to attempt to sway your judgment by stating my views on what you print.

One would expect to find advertisements for such products as *Omnicron Conspiracy* in the back pages of some scuzzy girlie magazine, not in your publication. This type of advertisement does a disservice to our society and exhibits a degeneracy of principles, morals and propriety.

Claude Peachey
Myrtle Point, OR

Actually, Claude, we have turned down advertisements because we felt they were inappropriate for our readership in terms of tone, content and quality. We didn't find the tongue-in-cheek science fiction adventure in question to be offensive. As for your concerns about turning the ills of society into a game, please note that the ad said "You'll be tempted [our emphasis] with cheap booze, wild sex and mind-altering drugs." Temptation is not the same as giving in to temptation and, in this particular case, players would be penalized for taking the mind-altering drugs. As for the "wild" women, the extra-terrestrial appearance (hence, unreality) should have been obvious from the green-skinned "woman" in the ad. Detective stories have always dealt with the seamy underside of society, whether it be Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler or Robert W. Parker and Dick Francis. In any form of art, one cannot adequately depict the triumph of good over evil without sufficiently portraying the evil.

Keyboard Counterpoint

I am a wargamer who mainly plays with paper and cardboard (*Squad Leader*, etc.). I purchased *Bomb Alley*, my first computer wargame in 1984. I loved it at first, but then I found the computer player to be rather a blithering idiot. This problem has yet to be solved and I can sympathize with the technological constraints.

What I do not understand is why software manufacturers make it so difficult for more than one player to participate. With most computer wargames, the player who is not at the computer must twiddle his thumbs while the other is at the computer. This problem could easily be solved by using the computer to print all information necessary for both players and then, using the keyboard only to input orders which the players have simultaneously written down.

The only game I have successfully played with more than one player is *Cartels and Cutthroats*. I've, in fact, played it with six. In Cartels, players can quickly look at their data without inputting any orders. After looking at the data, they can make decisions at their leisure somewhere else in the room. When everyone is done writing orders, all orders are input into the computer very quickly. This made for a fast-paced six player game with little idle time for any of the players.

Stellar Crusade is the only computer wargame I have found with as much detail as many of the boardgames I have played. The computer player is an idiot, and I can't play the game with a human because no one wants to play musical chairs with the keyboard. Why can't all the information be printed out so that we can take out turns simultaneously, using the keyboard only as an order input device?

Chris Kolenda
Richmond, TX

We liked Dan Bunten's now out-of print Cartels and Cutthroats, *too. In fact, your letter prompted us to wonder why print-outs of game positions were not a standard feature in computer wargames. So, we asked* Strategic Simulations, Inc., *publisher of the games you mentioned, why it was not. The informal survey of their development personnel indicated that "Although it sounds simple to have maps printed, there are so many different types of printers available that configuring our games to work with most of them would entail a major amount of work. At this point in time, it seems that most people are concerned with the best sound and graphics in their games, so that's what SSI is currently concentrating on."*

Nonetheless, CGW agrees with you and asks the manufacturers to give serious consideration to your suggestion. If maps are too difficult, then they could at least give us unit data.

Inside the Industry

News, Notes and Quotes From the Computer Entertainment Industry

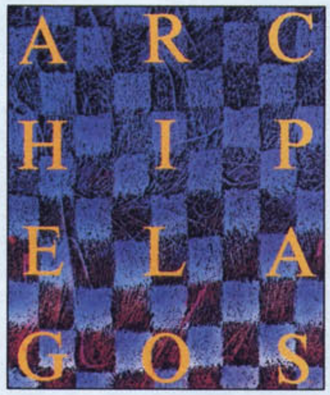
Massive Layoff at Epyx Signals End of Era

On September 15, 1989, **Epyx** officially released more than half of its work force. Some sources indicated to *CGW* that as many as 60 out of 76 total employees may have been given notice. The shocking layoff signaled major changes at the software publisher which had been specializing in action computer games since its inception as **Automated Simulations** in 1979. According to company spokesperson, Noreen Lovoi, **Epyx** plans to withdraw from its position as a full service publisher by the beginning of 1990. The company will finish developing and market the titles already announced for the holiday season (like *California Games II* and *Ishido*), but will focus on *developing* games rather than *publishing* them in the future.

One significant factor in the changes at **Epyx** is that the company will concentrate on videogame development, particularly in relationship to the cartridge system which they recently developed for **Atari**. The company will still design some disk-based products, but will limit its responsibilities as publisher to, at most, an "affiliated label/publisher" role.

Epyx had been reported to be in a weak position financially since its first quarter returns (like those throughout the disk-based software industry) were excessively high. According to Ms. Lovoi, the company's price slashing promotion earlier this year seemed like it was turning this vulnerable financial position around, but unanticipated financial difficulties forced the company to take the current drastic action. Rumors have attributed the company's financial difficulty to a combination of significant investments in hardware development which have not paid adequate dividends and poor sales in the disk-based entertainment software market in general, but the company has offered no official description of the financial pressures. The company had just raised $8 million in new financing for their consumer electronics division (i.e. VCR games) during 1988, but the influx of new capital did not allow the company as much flexibility as it had anticipated.

Britannica Changes "Archipelagos"



In *CGW* #62, Wyatt Lee offered a Sneak Preview of **Britannica Software**'s upcoming *Archipelagos*, the first product in the company's new "Fanfare" line of entertainment software products. The early look was based upon *Archipelagos* as it was published in Great Britain and described the fiction surrounding the game as it is described in the British version. When **Britannica** actually released *Archipelagos* in the United States, the fiction had been extensively modified. Now, the player is attempting to undo the major effects of serious pollution and save a badly devastated planet rather than rescue the "Dreamlands" of the British version. The article in the August issue of *CGW* does a good job of describing game play, but all the terminology utilized is relevant to the British version rather than the U.S. product. As pictured on this page, the packaging is significantly different from that pictured in the August issue, as well.

Lucasfilm Games Establishes Cartridge Group

CGW learned at press time that **Lucasfilm Games** has recruited Greg Hammond, currently a producer for **Broderbund Software**, to head up a new projects group with special focus on cartridge-based videogames. According to Steve Arnold, General Manager of the Games Division at **Lucasfilm**, the expansion into cartridge based games will begin with cartridge versions of **Lucasfilm** games which have been hits in disk format and should continue into the development of original titles unique to the cartridge format.

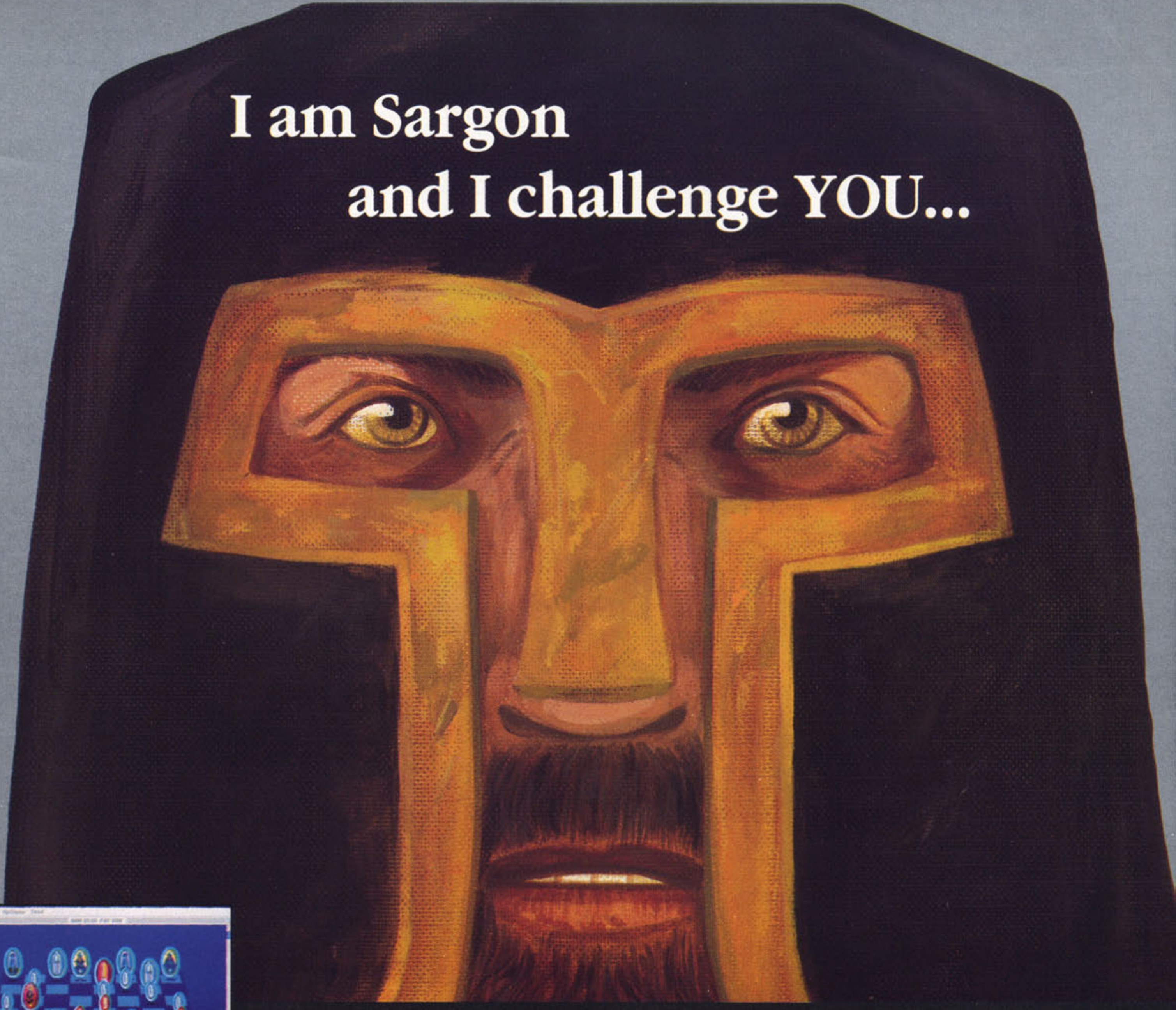
Asked if recent reports of inventory overstock did not indicate a softening of the 8-bit videogame market, Arnold responded that even if the **Nintendo** market has peaked (and he did not believe that this has been proven by any means), software publishers will certainly be able to ride the downhill slope profitably for a *very* long time. Questioned about the new dedicated game machines: **Sega** *Genesis* and **NEC**'s *TurboGrafx 16*, Arnold would only smile and indicate that **Lucasfilm** would be willing to enter those markets if details were mutually acceptable. *CGW*'s sources indicate that substantive conversations have been held with **NEC** (i.e. a deal *could* be in the works) and that initial dialogues with "others" have been established.

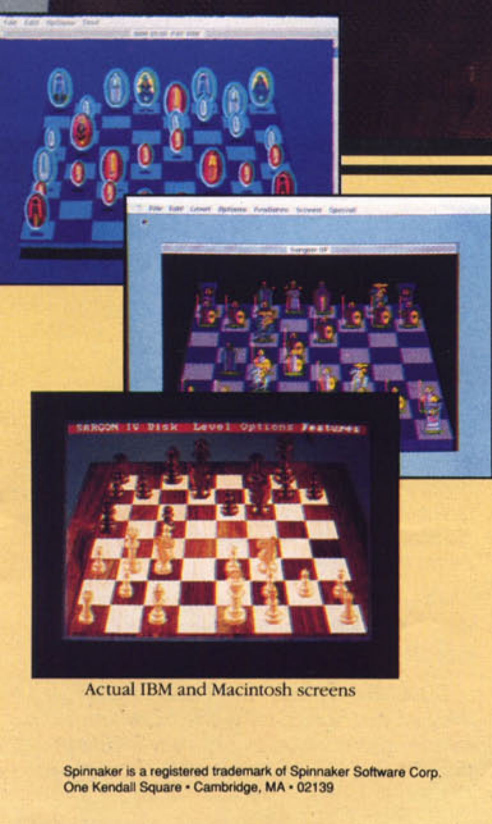
Polarware Purchased by Texas Investors

On September 13, 1989, **Polarware, Inc.** (publisher of *The Spy's Adventures* series and *Transylvania*), was acquired by **Merit Acquisition Corporation**, a Texas-based company, and merged with the latter's educational and productivity software division, **Merit Software**. Future games from **Polarware** will still bear the familiar label. **Polarware** has been publishing computer games and educational software for years, but has never really had the capital to expand. Both the software firm and the investment company have expressed hope that the merger will enable **Polarware** to expand its product line and market its software more effectively.

Circle Reader Service #18 »

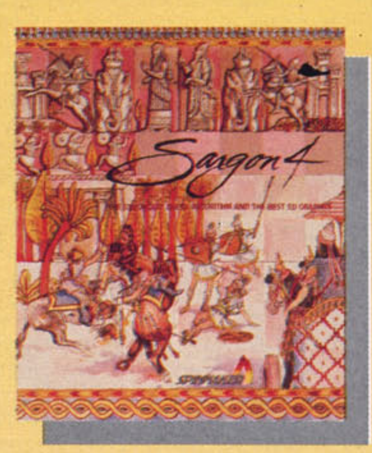
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SPINNAKER

The Rumor Bag



by Ezekiel Rutherford Beauregard III

The paddlewheel churned in the muddy Ohio and the "Belle of Louisville" steamed majestically past the riverfront. A concrete embankment loomed beside us with a painted message revealing the high water line of a old flood. "There hasn't been a storm like that since," muttered one of my buddies from the Falls of the Ohio Wargaming Society.

I couldn't resist flaunting my inside information as the world-famous *CGW* gossip columnist, so I interrupted my companion/travel guide. "Of course," I lectured, pronouncing the pearls of computer game wisdom trippingly on the tongue, "**Simulations Canada** has something of a storm to introduce late this year. *Malta Storm*, their operational level World War II game is undergoing the finishing touches even as we speak." Then, to suit the action to the word, I followed my journalistic thrust with yet another, "In fact, they're now working on a Mediterranean Theater version of *Kriegsmarine*, to be entitled *Fleet Med*."

"Sounds like a Yuppie vacation to me," muttered someone next to me. I couldn't allow my authoritative pronouncements to be undermined by levity, so I informed him that the company is also hard at work on *Main Battle Tank: Middle East*. Just then, my friend pointed and said, "There's the Candy Bridge. We're almost back."

By "Candy Bridge", I presumed he meant "Kennedy Bridge" and I had simply misunderstood his southern accent. The skyline of Louisville looked imposing on the horizon, but the fiery colors of the sunset betrayed the amount of pollution in the air. One member of the group said he'd like to sit the entire Louisville City Council down and force them to play *Sim City* until they could solve some of the congestion and pollution problems. Another said he wished they could get all the world leaders together and make them play some kind of geopolitical planning simulation. I told them all the good news that **Maxis Software** should have *Sim Earth* ready in 1990.

The riverboat docked and we headed for our cars. One of my friends pulled me over and whispered something in my ear. Now, that's not easy for one person to do when the other person's trademark is a bag over his head, but he managed to get through to me. He asked me if I remembered writing about *Light Division* and *Kanev*, two board wargames that were due to be converted by **3W Computer Games**. He told me that **3W** will no longer be publishing *Light Division* and that they intend to create a spin-off company in order to publish *Kanev*. "That probably means," he said, "we shouldn't hold our breaths for either one."

He insisted that I give him some new information in exchange for that insight. I told him what I knew about *Second Front*, Gary Grigsby's redesign of *War In Russia* for the IBM. I told him that the new design allows for reinforcements; offers air combat that is so detailed it can handle losses of airplanes down to the individual plane; details land combat losses down to the battalion or battery, gives leaders a resupply bonus; and simplifies the handling of railroads so that players don't have to specifically rebuild them (if the player hangs on to them, the rebuild is automatic).

He seemed satisfied and we got into his car. He'd promised to take me to the Kentucky Derby Museum out at Churchill Downs. On the way, we drove through the middle of a car chase that would put a "Dirty Harry" movie to shame. The police cars caromed past us with their blue lights creating a laserium in the city streets. The noise was unbelievable. Probably something like **Access Software**'s *RealSound* soundtrack for *Crime Wave*, their arcade shoot-'em-up, similar in style to the coin-op game, *Narc*.

Unfortunately, it is not a good idea to be wearing a bag over one's head when the police are chasing a couple of bank robbers. They pulled us over and had us spread-eagled across the hood before you could say, *David Wolf, Secret Agent*. Along with my life passing before my eyes, so did the knowledge that **Dynamix** is already working on a sequel to their adventure/simulation game.

I explained to the officers that I was the Rumor Bag guy, but they wouldn't believe me without my sharing a tip on a new game. "Well," I stammered, "**Maxis** is working on a new title called *Robot Combat*." They still weren't quite sure, so they took me over to the patrol car and asked me to do something with their laptop. I used their modem to call GEnie. They weren't that impressed until I told them that the Games Round Table's conferences for November would include designers: Ed Bever, Gary Grigsby, and boardgame guru, Jim Dunnigan.

"Okay, okay," I said in a panic, "how about if we call the Computer Sports Network?" They agreed. So, I showed them how to access *Tournament Golf* and told them that the network would be using *APBA Baseball* in order to run *General Manager*, a major league baseball simulation where players set up their teams and the schedule is decided via *APBA Baseball*. I also told them that the network would eventually be refereeing full-scale rotisserie leagues.

The police officers let us go and we passed a city park. The "boys of summer" were playing softball and it reminded my friend about **Cinemaware**'s *TV Sports* series. "Aren't they going to come out with *TV Sports Baseball*?" he whined. I consoled him with the good news that they were, but then told him the bad news that we weren't expecting it until mid-1990.

Finally, we arrived at the Kentucky Derby Museum. Wandering among the memorabilia of the fastest two minutes in sport, I imagined myself in the colors of a Derby winner. I told my friend about my dream and the "Jockey Competition" module of **Omni-Play™ Horse Racing**, due in the first quarter of next year. It's supposed to come in a package with Track 3 in which you see everything from the perspective of the horse's back. "It's a good thing the computer simulation is coming out," he laughed, "because you'd never make a jockey."

"Why," I asked in all innocence, "don't they let you ride with a bag over your head?"

"Sure," he replied, "but I don't think they let the horses carry the extra weight." I sucked in my gut, but quickly realized I *needed* the computer game. **CGW**

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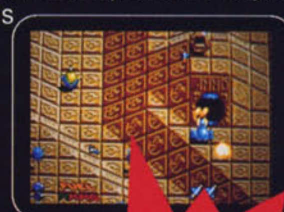
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"...slick presentation... unbeatable game-play...will undoubtedly be the Star Goose that laid the golden egg." ST Action

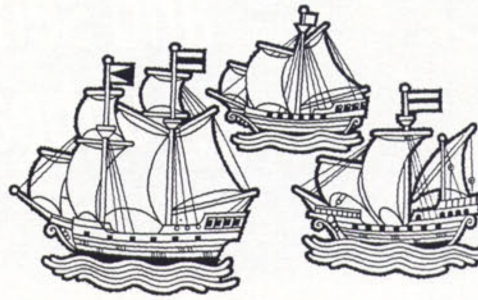
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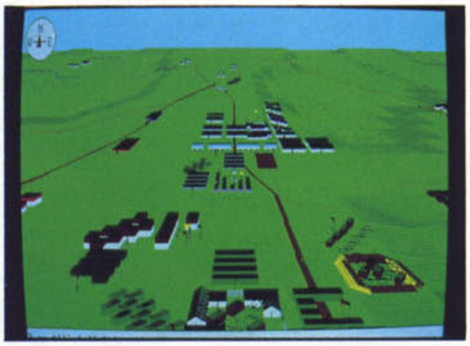
New From SPINNAKER

Over There

Wargames and More



by Paul Rigby



Waterloo (PC)



Conflict Europe (Amiga)



Bloodwych (ST)

The British are coming, as well as the French, the Germans, and others. European games are appearing on U.S. retail shelves in increasing numbers. We thought it was time to take a look at what is happening "over there". Our new European correspondent is Paul Rigby (Liverpool, England). In the context of his column, "available now" means that the game is presently available in Europe.

Although 8-bit machines are still popular in Europe, there have been a number of growing trends and changes since an "Over There" column was last seen within these pages. On the hardware side, the Amiga and the ST have an increasing user base (the latter being far more popular in Europe than in the US), the PC has emerged as a game machine, and there has been a relatively low infiltration of videogame consoles. On the software front, we have seen the emergence of RPGs and strategy games as popular game subjects and observed the growing strength of France and Germany as serious competitors in the market. In fact, the following report highlights many of the above trends.

Originating from **PSS**, one of the UK's top wargame houses, comes *Waterloo* (PC, Amiga). Written by Peter Turcan who, incidentally, wrote *Borodino* for **Atari**'s new software wing, *Waterloo* continues Peter's 3D aspect to wargaming. Coming with 108-page manual and a glossy fold-out map of the combat area, *Waterloo* uses the *Borodino* system of play. Hence, you can view the combat from any direction. You are able to view your troop dispositions and movements and clicking on troop "blocks" identifies the unit. Orders are typed in English for example, "Reille form a defence line from the west flank to La-Belle-Alliance linking with D-Erlon."

You may play either Wellington or Napoleon, whether solitaire, human vs. human, or computer vs computer. With a variety of orders and reports, all modified by your supporting general's characters (impetuous, cautious, etc), *Waterloo* is an intriguing product and is available now.

Continuing the wargame theme is **Mirrorsoft**'s *Conflict Europe* (PC, Amiga, ST), which simulates the action during World War Three from a strategic level. You take the position of Supreme Commander of NATO or the Warsaw Pact. In addition to land and air strikes, you may call upon "special" offensive actions such as Special Forces and Chemical/Tactical Nuclear Strikes. A variety of reports are available including: population distribution, areas of high radiation, logistics, victory conditions and command ability, special missions (e.g; anti-satellite) and air missions (counter air). Also, you can communicate with the enemy, issuing threats and so on. Available now.

Imageworks' *Bloodwych* (PC, Amiga, ST, C64, Amstrad CPC, Spectrum) can best be described as a two-player version of *Dungeon Master*. The people of Bloodwych fear the awakening of the Behemoth, entombed within the castle. He is stirring, certain to bring with him famine, pestilence and death. To seal the Behemoth within his tomb forever, you must find and unify the crystals of Sanguis. A maximum of two character teams must search the castle for hidden crystals. Although *Bloodwych* can be played solo, the two player option brings interesting questions into play. Do you co-operate with each other, compete as enemies or allow more subtle treachery to come into play? *Bloodwych* has a horizontally split-screen interface, a variety of character levels, magic, character interaction, minimal animation and sound. The *Bloodwych* release is imminent.

Originating from France's **Exxos** (publishers of *Captain Blood & Purple Saturn Day*) comes *Kult* (Amiga, ST, PC) - a graphic adventure. The Protozorqs are a primitive, but powerful, mountain race. They worship brutal Gods who, it is hoped, will deliver them from their guilt and shame (it's a long story). You play a Tuner, a human with unusual powers. You must rescue your girlfriend who is being held prisoner by the Protozorqs.

(Continued on page 91)



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A deserted house...
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SPINNAKER

INDIANA JONES and the LAST CRUSADE

The Whole Gauntlet For The Holy Grail

by David M. Wilson

Once every decade or so, a hero comes along that captures the hearts and imaginations of the American people. Such a hero is Indiana Jones, a schizophrenic cross between an archaeology professor and swashbuckling adventurer. Now, once again, Indy makes the momentous leap from silver screen to computer screen in the multi-leveled *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade: The Action Game.*



Upon loading the game players will be treated to a rousing rendition of John Williams' theme song from the movie. The music is stimulating and the graphics clear and concise. Each level is filled with different types of scenery,objects and obstacles.

TITLE:	Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade: The Action Game
SYSTEMS:	C64/128, Atari ST, Amiga, and IBM
PRICE:	C-64 ($29.95) Others ($39.95)
DESIGNERS:	U.S. Gold
PUBLISHER:	Lucasfilm Games San Rafael, CA

The first level is a quest for the cross of Coronado. Indy must leap from ledge-to-ledge, rope-to-rope and over stacks of barrels as he searches for the treasure. Our hero quickly learns *not* to leap from the tops of the barrels because he will more than likely hit his head on Stalactites hanging from the ceiling. He must also avoid falling stalactites in this sequence.

The most important part of level one is to pick up torches as you progress, since each torch will only shine for a limited amount of time. When the torch being carried runs out, players will find their hero in total darkness. Being in a dark cave leads to quick loss of life from running into walls, taking bad falls, etc.

Once Indy gets the cross, he climbs out of the cave and catches a ride on the circus train. This segment is the most like the movie because Indy has to jump from car to car and avoid the giraffes' heads and the rhino's horn. He even has to fight a bad guy on the last car. Unfortunately, this segment is sadly lacking in challenge.

Perhaps, part of the problem is that the bad guys on all of the levels are most cooperative. Those with throwing axes or guns will throw their hatchets or fire their guns twice and then, obligingly turn their back. Those without weapons simply allow the player to walk up and sock them. Every villain in the game can be dispatched with a single blow from Indy's fist or his whip. The fight segments should have lasted longer and been more challenging.

Level two takes Indy into the catacombs in search of the Crusader's shield. The designers have incorporated a bit of interesting copy protection here. A series of arches with hieroglyphic symbols appears at the beginning of the level. Above the arches appears a date. Players then match the date on a non-reproducible grid and select the arch which matches the corresponding date. Players who choose the wrong arch can still play, however they will never find the shield. When the player makes the wrong choice, the program removes the shield from the maze making the level impossible to complete. Even if the player chooses the correct arch, but he is unable to complete the level before losing the amount of lives he has left, he will have to use the grid all over again to continue where he left off. I understand the publisher's desire to copy protect their programs, but the player who is stuck on level two of this game will be extremely annoyed by having to repeatedly refer to the chart in order to restart the level.

Once into the level, players will be dodging rats and avoiding falling fireballs. Once the player collects the crusader's shield, he must scale the castle wall and have Indy use his whip to swing across from ledge to ledge. Lightning is striking regularly during this segment and will occasionally tear away a portion of the ledge Indy is standing on.

While playing level three, Indy will be found on board the airship. There the search begins for the Grail diary that his father has left on board. If the player fails to collect passes from the passengers, an alarm will sound. Big Deal! Since the soldiers don't really fight, what does it matter? About the only important consideration is that picking up the passes will lead to a higher score.

If players will go to the left and keep travelling downward, they should find a room with the diary and a control panel. Then, by reversing their path, they should be able to get all the way back up. Whenever Indy encounters a guard, that means he is more than likely heading the right direction.

Level four is, by far, the shortest level. Since Indy's father is dying, Indy is pressed for time to find the grail. He must maneuver over obstacles quickly, but give heed to the lettering on the blocks. Finding the blocks with the odd lettering is the key to being able to leap across to the right spot.

The game could have been much more. The game does little to put the player in the role of Indiana Jones. Indy is a good fighter, but he doesn't beat the villain with one punch in any of the three movies which featured him. Further, there are only two places where he can use his whip for swinging

(Continued on page 56)

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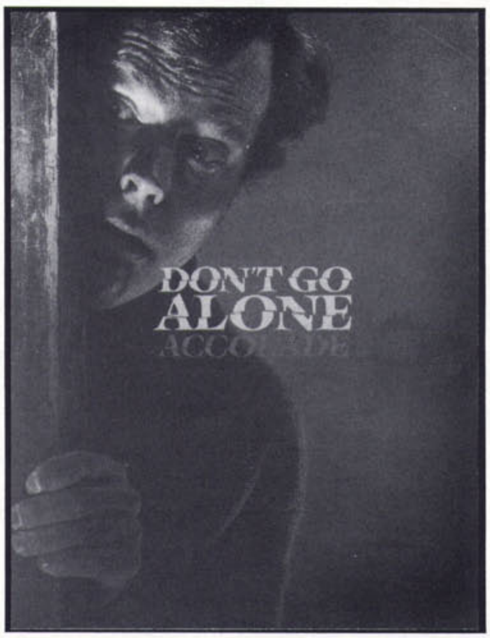
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"Don't Go Alone"

Accolade's Terrifying New Adventure

by Scorpia

Don't Go Alone is a sort of computer role-playing game, with a modern-day setting. The basic objective is simple: go through ten levels of an old house, find the nasty Ancient One, and kill him. It's your typical "destroy the evil wizard" romp.



TITLE:	Don't Go Alone
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$39.95
DESIGNER:	Sterling Silver Software
PUBLISHER:	Accolade San Jose, CA

You begin by choosing your party of four characters. Each character represents a different class (chemist, physicist, psychic, and adventurer) and you must have one of each in the group. Selections are made from a pool of sixteen pre-generated characters. You aren't able to create any from scratch.

The characters have the standard set of attributes (strength, dexterity, intelligence, etc), plus two that are special. One is the fear index and the other is the concentration index. Concentration is necessary to the successful mixing of formulas (more on that soon), especially the more potent ones. The fear index measures how terrified a character is. If the fear index goes too high, that character is too scared to do anything (except maybe gibber in fright).

In addition to muscle, there is also magic. However, since this is a modern-day setting, the spells are called "formulas" and are put together by selecting components from the table of elements. Each character begins the game with a "book" entitled *Chemistry Volume I* and the psychic gets two more besides that one.

The various chemistry books contain formulas and descriptions of their functions. Except for volume one, the formulas in the books are all incomplete. Instead of being written out in full, they appear like this: Au+??+??+Ir. You will have to figure out, as the game progresses, what elements belong where the question marks are in each formula.

This can be done through a boring procedure of exhaustive trial and error; how long it takes will depend on how long the formula is (three or four elements) and how many components you already know. If you only need to find one element, it won't take too long (the game does not use the complete periodic table, which is fortunate). You simply substitute one element at a time and try mixing the formula until you obtain a success. All formulas are unique, so you can't create something else inadvertently, and you won't blow yourself up with a bad mixture.

Formulas that are mostly or completely blank may seem impossible to figure out. However, this is not the case. As time passes in the game, the formulas change. Therefore it is important to re-read the books every now and then to see if a new element has appeared in a blank spot. Continuing with the example given above, after awhile it might suddenly look like: ??+O+??+Ir. The "Au" that was there before is now blank, but the element "O" now fills the second position. At this point, you know three of the four components, and can find the last one through trial and error. Needless to say, you should copy all incomplete formulas as soon as you find them, and fill in the blanks over time.

The most interesting aspect of *Don't Go Alone* is that characters don't die. While there are monsters galore in the house, none of them make physical attacks of any kind. Instead, they all generate fear to varying degrees. The more powerful monsters are naturally more scary than lesser ones, thus it will be some time before you come across anything that can really freeze up team members. If everyone gets frightened out of their minds, the group is moved to a "safer area" to give them time to get over their fright.

The major problem in combat is not fear, but time. You only have so long to defeat a particular critter. If you don't manage that, it will fade away, taking with it something from your inventory (any non-equipped item). This can lead to serious difficulties if the monsters start vanishing with your chemistry books (yes, they can nab those, too). While books can be found in the game, my experience is that most of them don't start turning up as treasure until you're way down in the house, say around eighth level or so. That's a long time to wait if you lose one or more volumes early in the game.

Monsters will also take something from you if you retreat in combat, so running doesn't help much; you're just as badly off as you would be in fighting it out. Most of the items can be replaced without too much trouble in other combats, so losing a gem or spare weapon is not exactly a disaster. However, losing a chemistry volume can be bad news. So, it pays to save the game often, and restore if a critter has walked off with one of your books.

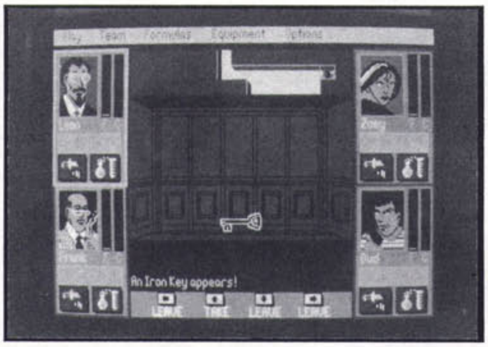
The fighting itself is a simple procedure; you either attack with a weapon or mix up a formula. Only one formula can be ready at a time, but you can scroll through your list to change from one to another. The main drawback to combat is that only one person can fight at a time. You choose the active character, and he or she is the one who engages in combat. You can switch to another character (this is not considered an action), but still, only one at a time can do anything.

The basic reasons for switching are concentration and strength. Physical fighting makes a character tired, and therefore less effective. Mixing formulas lowers concentration; if it goes too low, that person can't prepare any more of them.

(Continued from page 18)

Don't Go Alone

Thus, switching around is necessary, especially when you start coming up against the tougher monsters. Strength and concentration are restored over time as you wander around the house.



Combat, by the way, is relatively well-balanced. There are usually one or two extra-tough critters per level, with the rest ranging from extremely easy to pretty hard. The party should not find itself overwhelmed or frustrated unless you go too far too fast.

Treasure comes in four types: weapons, armor, protective items, and (rarely) chemistry books. Usually, something will appear on the screen after a monster has been defeated (not always, but usually). The active character is the one who can take it. This is where you need to be careful, because characters cannot hand off items to one another. So, if you really want Frank the Chemist to have the bomber jacket, make sure he's the active person. Otherwise, if someone else picks it up, Frank is out of luck until you come across another jacket.

A character can have only one of a specific item at a time. For example, if Bud the Adventurer already has a meat cleaver, he won't be able to pick up another one. This makes sense; he doesn't need more than one, anyway. Also, as inventory space is limited, it's a good idea to dump unneeded items (extra weapons and armor) to make room for more important things (such as protective gems). There is a formula that will tell you the strength of any weapon or armor, so you shouldn't drop something good by mistake.

Graphics are generally good in the game. Almost all encounters have animated monsters and some of these are extremely well-done. The blood demon, rising up from a puddle of blood on the floor, is one of the best in the game. Others may not be quite as spectacular, but are equally fascinating to watch. A great deal of work obviously went into this portion of the game and it definitely comes through.

Movement around the house is accomplished through the four arrow keys, and the game has two very nice auto-mapping features. One is constant; you can see your party and a small portion of the level displayed above the larger, 3-D view of the area you're in. Thus you have two views at once, overhead (Ultima style) and head-on (3-D).

The other mapping feature is invoked through a formula; this shows you the entire level. Of course, if you haven't been over much of it, you won't see very much on the map, either, because areas you haven't yet passed through are blank. This is a larger map, and the arrow keys are used to scroll it around while your party remains stationary.

Exploring the house consists mainly of walking around, killing assorted monsters, and looking for the stairway to the next level. In my version, there were no puzzles at all, no mysteries to solve, and no particularly difficult obstacles to overcome. Special keys were needed in a couple of places to get through doors. Otherwise, it was generally plain (very plain) sailing from one level to the next.

This is a grave disappointment, as it gives the game a very empty feel. There is no real substance to it. Walking along corridor after corridor, going through empty room after empty room, with nothing much to do besides fight monsters, soon becomes boring. There were three mysterious pictures that showed up in a number of rooms and hallways; for awhile I thought they might be important, but they turned out to be totally irrelevant.

There is no way to use or manipulate anything; there aren't any such commands in the game. That in itself is a very severe restriction. A lot can be done with a limited command set (as **Sierra**'s *Manhunter* series ably demonstrated), but **Don't Go Alone** does not seem to have any mechanism at all for any type of puzzle solving.

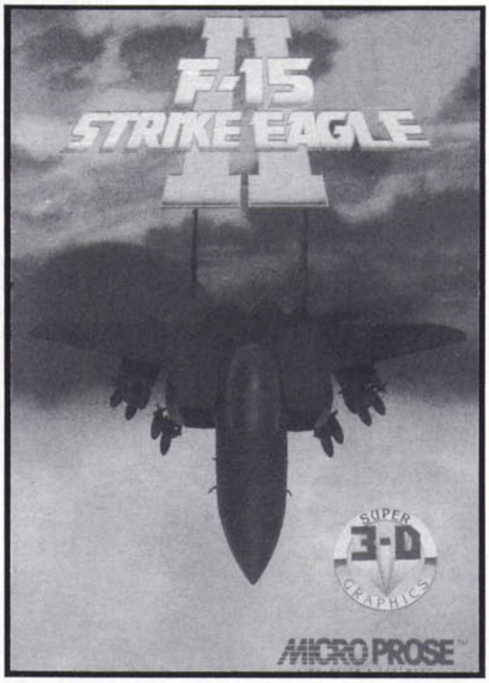
Overall, then, the game is mainly an exercise in monster-mash, although on a more limited scale than most CRPG's. The simple interface, very nice auto-mapping, balanced combat, interesting monster graphics, formula components, and unique use of fear are all pluses, but these are overshadowed by the large minus of having little substantive to do in the game. Essentially, this game is best for those with little or no experience with CRPG's.

Bottom line: Beginners only.

 CGW

F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II

Review by M. Evan Brooks



TITLE:	F-15 Strike Eagle II
SYSTEM:	IBM with 384K (Amiga soon)
PRICE:	$54.95
PUBLISHER:	MicroProse Hunt Valley, MD

F-15 Strike Eagle II (1989) is an updated look at **MicroProse**'s first best-seller, *F-15 Strike Eagle* (1984). Although a simulator of the same weapons system, the F-15 jet fighter, the products differ radically in both appearance and play. In fact, for the old-time computer gamer (i.e. one playing since 1984!), a look back at the original product will prove most disappointing.

The original F-15 was a great product in its day. However, it no longer satisfies. It is amazing how demanding (jaded?) we have become. The line-drawn opponent in the original game resembles Wonder Woman's invisible aircraft. In short, the classic gave the appearance of being "primitive" and even arcade-like.

Now, **MicroProse** has reworked the game, using the benefit of five years of computer design experience and *F-19: Stealth Fighter* (*F-19*) game technology, in order to bring Strike Eagle up to contemporary standards. *F-15 Strike Eagle II* (*F-15 II*) is not an innovation, but rather an update of a "classic", a sort of "F-19 Jr." Meets "F-15+".

Documentation

Up to **Microprose** standards, the documentation is well-written and concise. Separate playing maps of the scenarios are included, as well as a "Keyboard Control/HUD (Heads-Up Display)" ready reference card. Installation on a hard drive is easy (with a key disk protection scheme) and play is expedited by using the hard disk format. Also, a joystick is strongly recommended for maximum ease of play.

The documentation offers a tutorial and layered degrees of difficulty, so one may progress to more "realistic" levels as desired. However, it is important to remember that *F-15 II* is more of a game than a simulation—thus, even the most realistic level ("Ace") is playable for the intermediate gamer.

Four (4) separate scenarios are offered: Libya, Persian Gulf, Vietnam, and the Middle East. For those having a copy of *F-19*, the scenarios for North Cape and Central Europe may be "ported over" for additional game play. However, *F-15 II* is a simpler product—dedicated to those of us who found *F-19* too difficult. This is to be appreciated, since *F-19* can easily become a way of life as opposed to a game. For those persons desiring the additional scenarios, it seems likely that Microprose will be releasing them in a separate "scenario package" together with potential new "hot spots". Altogether, the documentation and play aids are well done and assist the user in easy access to air combat operations.

Graphics

Graphics are a continuation of *F-19*. For those who possess a fast machine and VGA, the horizon now utilizes the 256-color palette, which shows a shading of the horizon by striated layers of sky for added realism. In addition, two (2) director levels are available—Level 1 shows anything happening in the theater of operations. If a SAM is launched, the screen shifts to the launch site. If an enemy plane is taking off, the view shifts to the enemy airfield. However, once contact is initiated, this level may become very confusing and is not recommended for continued use. Level 2 shows only actions that the player initiates. These levels may be toggled on and off by a single key-press. A potential problem is that users with older machines (8088) may encounter occasional computer "lock-up" in cycling through the graphic detail speeds.

Multiple views offer fascinating vistas as to what is happening—left, right, rear, slot, chase, side, missile, tactical, reverse tactical (i.e. from the enemy's viewpoint!), and normal. The biggest problem with having the wide assortment of viewpoint alternatives is that one can become mesmerized and literally fly into the ground.

F-15 II utilizes polygon technology in which objects are represented by filled-in polygonal shapes. This works well at a distance, but the effect breaks down somewhat at close range. Also, sometimes the cloud cover appears "too" substantial and resembles an overhanging roof. Still, these aspects are *minor* and become accepted with experience.

Game Play

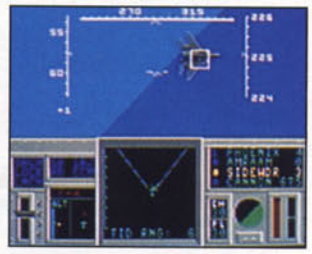
F-15 II is a player's game. Unlike *F-19*, in which a successful mission required *avoiding* the enemy, here the player concentrates on air combat. Even the designer notes characterize *F-15 II* as a "Rambo in the sky". There is no stealth technology here. One simply takes names and kicks butt!

Note: In a throwback to the original *F-15*, an enemy plane is always flying immediately above upon take-off. Albeit unrealistic, it allows a quick kill and initial combat orientation/gratification.

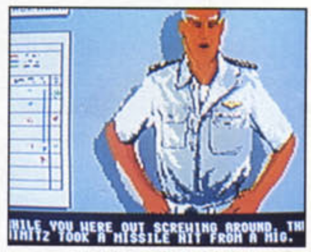
(Continued on page 70)

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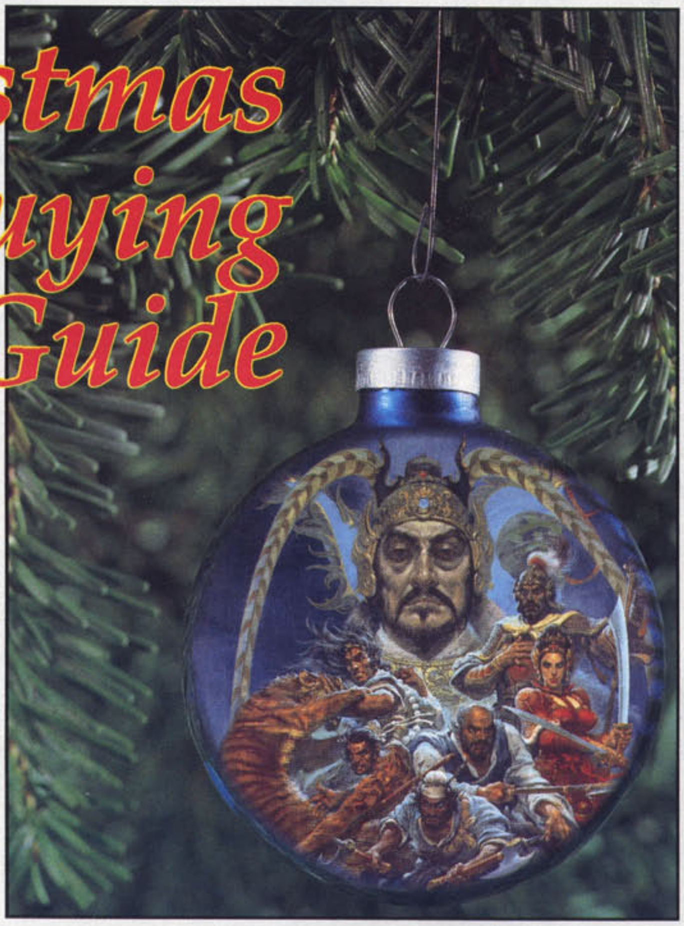
"F-14 TOMCAT is one of the best combat flight simulators for the 64. Graphics, sound, and action are excellent, and the framework of a career scenario adds a sense of realism and purpose."
– *Compute's Gazette*

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– *Computer Gaming World*

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Christmas Buying Guide



CGW's Third Annual Christmas Buying Guide

For the third year in a row, CGW's editorial staff has taken the time to put on our elf suits and gather together a distinctive hint list for our readers to annotate and pass on to their personal "Santa Claus". In general, CGW asked the designer(s) or producer(s) of each game to comment on why they designed this game at this particular time, how each game is distinctive from other games in the genre, and why it would make a good holiday gift. Since many of these products were not fully functional at the time we took the screen shots and interviewed the designers, readers should recognize that we have basically taken the publishers' word for what each product will be. The Christmas Buying Guide is intended to be a catalog of new games that should be very interesting to our readers.

For maximum effectiveness, each husband is advised to place this article underneath his wife's pillow to stimulate subliminal purchase orders; college students are encouraged to append annotated copies of this list to the next telegram home requesting funds; and offspring living at home should carefully tape the summary of each desired product to the mirror in the bathroom of their parental units in order to induce consumption of mass quantities of computer games.

Simulations

A-10 Tank Killer (*Dynamix*): Since the A-10 environment fairly swarms with targets and enemy threats, the design team at Dynamix felt like this plane would be the ideal subject for their first simulation on their new label. Digitized graphics, 256 color VGA support, bit map explosions, cinematic external views, and missions with interconnected goals make this a distinctive product which will pump up gamers' excitement. Not only does *A-10 Tank Killer* offer a realistic-looking cockpit, but real actors, sets, and uniforms were used to add to the game's atmosphere. The gift-giving value of *A-10 Tank Killer* should continue through the next few years, since the game will be supplemented with new campaigns and battles through Dynamix's *Simulation System Modules*™. IBM ($49.95).

Blue Angels (*Accolade*): Accolade's formation flying simulator was developed by the trio of Paul Butler, Robin Burgener, and Rick Banks. They were interested in designing the product for two important reasons. First, they wanted to understand the detailed nuances of flying in tight formations. Second, it was developed as a tribute to Rick Banks' father, a pilot who died testing planes. The designers believe that this simulation is distinctively different because it is one of the first products to specifically address formation flying; it offers multiple options in terms of positions in the formation and camera angles; and it will offer both *AdLib* and *CMS* sound support. The designers believe that the potential hours of entertainment and excitement combined with educational value make *Blue Angels* an intriguing gift idea. Amiga ($44.95), C-64 ($29.95), Apple IIGS and IBM ($49.95).

MechWarrior (*Activision*): According to John Skeel, producer/designer of *MechWarrior*, the idea of the game is to move beyond the *Battletech* role playing game

and allow the player to experience the *Battletech* (licensed from **FASA**) universe via a first person, out of the cockpit perspective. It is the only BattleMech simulation and by means of outstanding graphics, as well as sound support for both the *AdLib* and *Roland MT-32* sound boards, it presents a unique opportunity for blending action and role playing. He believes that the eight different "mechs" to command, combined with multiple missions and objectives, give the game sufficient gameplay to make it an excellent holiday gift. IBM ($49.95).

M-1 Tank Platoon (*Microprose*): Microprose developed *M-1 Tank Platoon* because they had been receiving customer requests for a realistic tank simulation for several years. The use of 3-D terrain with hills, buildings, trees, roads, and streams, as well as the capacity for rain, snow, and night actions and the ability to command a full platoon of four tanks, along with supporting vehicles, infantry, artillery and aircraft, marks *M-1 Tank Platoon* as a simulation which respects its subject, rather than being a simple action game. Holidays are an ideal time for play and the Microprose design team believes that "After you've jumped into real tank combat with *M-1 Tank Platoon*, anything else will seem like child's play." IBM ($69.95).

Tank (*Spectrum Holobyte*): When Spectrum Holobyte set out to create multiple military simulations which could be networked together, the development team decided that *Tank* would be the logical first release in the series (which will be entitled the *Electronic Battlefield Series™*), since modern battle tanks are the cornerstone of today's military strategy. The game's features include: head-to-head competition against another computer; topographic 3-D terrain with real slopes, mountains, and valleys; actions which include up to 32 different vehicles, as well as active air support and recon units; and provision for thermal and night modes. It should be a welcome holiday surprise for any gamer because it allows play on multiple levels. It offers everything from easy arcade-type action to complex strategy. IBM ($59.95).

Wolf Pack (*Broderbund*): John Garoia of **NovaLogic**, developers of *Wolfpack*, approached Broderbund with the idea for *Wolfpack*. His enthusiasm for the project, combined with the beautiful graphics already designed and the potential for a realistic, but fun, World War II naval combat simulation sold Broderbund on the idea. The uniqueness of the product stems from the player's ability to assume either side of the conflict, as either a German submarine commander or an Allied destroyer/convoy commander. In addition, the built-in scenario builder makes *Wolfpack* even a better value. Particularly with more and more gamers wanting simulations which take advantage of their VGA-capable machines, *Wolfpack* should be a colorful addition to anyone's holiday bounty. IBM ($49.95).

Role Playing

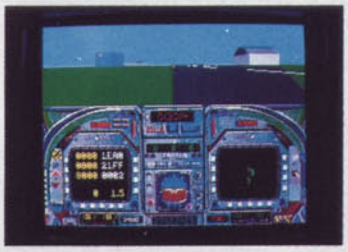
Hero's Quest (*Sierra*): In writing a game with the express purpose of introducing role-playing to adventure gamers and adventure gaming to role-players, Lori Cole may have created a whole new genre of games, Role-Playing/Adventure. *Hero's Quest* adds the plot and story of a graphic adventure game to the character creation and character building of a role-playing game. Unique to most games in the adventure genre, it also allows multiple solutions to most of the puzzles in order to allow for replay value. *Hero's Quest* would be an appropriate holiday surprise for lovers of either genre. IBM ($59.95).

Knights of Legend (*Origin*): Todd Mitchell Porter designed *Knights of Legend* to bring forth a true fantasy role-playing game with all the features he felt had been missing in CRPGs to date. *Knights of Legend* has taken more than eight years in development and offers a significant depth, particularly in the area of character development. It offers the most comprehensive combat system in the genre, but mixed with its menu and icon interface, it is destined to offer the fun of discovery such as role-playing gamers have never experienced it. The game will round out any fantasy gamer's holiday season because of the compelling drama of its story and its vivid universe full of colorful non-player characters. Apple, C-64, ($49.95).

Starflight II (*Electronic Arts*): In reality, this part of the story was planned when the original *Starflight* was designed. Since Greg Johnson and the rest of the crew at Binary Systems received encouragement to continue the saga in



A-10 Tank Killer



Blue Angels



M-1 Tank Platoon



MechWarrior



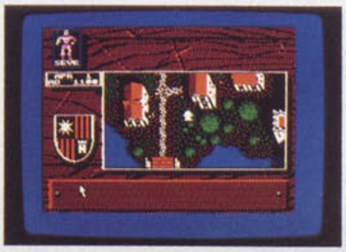
Tank



Wolf Pack



Hero's Quest



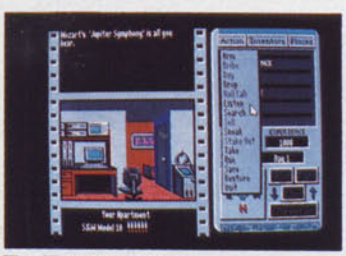
Knights of Legend



Starflight II



Swords of Twilight



The Third Courier



Windwalker

hundreds of fan letters and the design team believed that both the story and system could sustain a sequel (or more), they developed *Starflight II*. Though there are plenty of space games and plenty of "large" games on the market, Johnson insists that the *Starflight* series is distinctive for the freedom it allows the players. Since players can express themselves through the role-playing experience, he suggests, it is a satisfying one for them. In addition, the unique personalities of the alien races combined with the custom histories make the game have its own special flavor. Johnson says that mail from *Starflight* players indicates that people really enjoy playing the game together. Since togetherness is part of what makes the holidays special, *Starflight II* is an excellent addition to the packages under the tree. IBM ($49.95).

Swords of Twilight (*EA*): Jon Freeman and Ann Westphal were concerned because the standard approach to computer FRPs (fantasy role playing games) seemed rather clunky. With Amiga graphics and 68000 power, they believed that they could create a role-playing experience more immediate and life-like than anything simulated by rolling dice—or pretending to. *Swords of Twilight*, according to the designers, is distinctive because: No other game combines the action, excitement, and simple mechanics of *Archon* with a real plot, characterization, eloquent prose, sophisticated AI, and complex interaction. In fact, no other game mixes the variety, color, and scope of epic fantasy with real-world logic, ethics, and consequences. They believe *Swords of Twilight* is a great gift because, as a multi-player game, it also provides a great excuse to spend time with the person you give it to. Amiga ($49.95).

The Third Courier (*Accolade*): Take the role-playing genre and move it into the modern world with realistic situations, authentic locations, and logical constraints. That is what Ivan and Carol Manley have attempted to accomplish in this espionage/detective adventure from Accolade. Because of the emphasis on reality, the designers feel "No other product that we are aware of competes directly with *The Third Courier*." The husband/wife team feels that they have created a different game, a family present, that all family members can play and enjoy. Apple IIGS and IBM ($49.95).

Windwalker (*Origin*): From a personal interest in both the martial arts and oriental philosophy, Greg Malone created *Windwalker*, the sequel to *Moebius*. *Windwalker* offers animated action sequences crafted after observing real human beings compete and detailed graphics based on careful research of antique materials. Those who want to give a present which offers a chance for the gamer to grow in personal discipline and understanding will want to consider *Windwalker*. Amiga, Apple II, C-64 and IBM ($39.95)

Strategy

Combots (*Avalon Hill*): About two and one-half years ago, John Huff envisioned a game that was more open-ended than other computer games he had seen. Basically, he wanted to create a game where computer gamers could "play" with their machines. Like *Omega* (reviewed on page 52 of this issue), the game allows players to design their own combat robots (i.e. Combots). In *Combots*, however, players not only design routines for the basic machines, but they design routines for the special add-on devices, as well. *Combots* offers a flexible computer opponent where players can optimize the AI for particular scenarios and would be a delightful addition to a strategy gamer's holiday "haul". C-64 ($24.95).

Gold of the Americas (*Strategic Studies Group*): In *Gold of the Americas*, SSG unveils an entirely different approach. In this game, players will need to explore, colonize, invest wisely, use diplomacy, and engage in both land and sea combat. Imagine a *Reach for the Stars* style game of conquest set in a historical era of conquest and colonization. Then, imagine colorful EGA graphics to further enhance the game experience. That's the colorful package available when gamers open *Gold of the Americas* on Christmas morning. Amiga and IBM ($39.95).

Ishido (*Epyx*): Brad Fraeger (*Shanghai*), Michael Feinberg and Brodie Lockard developed *Ishido* as a "stone" game of abstract strategy due to their interest

(Continued on page 76)



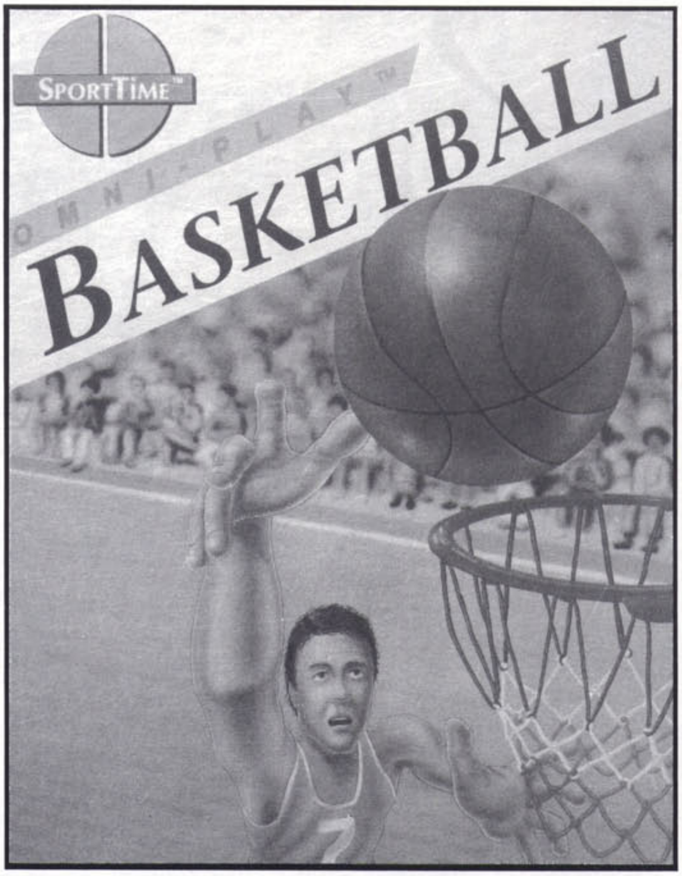
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Smooth As Silk

SportTime's "Omni-Play™ Basketball"

by Michael S. Chaut and Matt Rosenburg

Fourteen seconds remain in the game. You hang your head in disgust as the referee blows his whistle. He points to your center who has just committed his sixth foul, prompting his ejection from the game. "What is he, blind?" You signal to your captain to call "TIME-OUT!" Now, you're down three points and your star player just fouled out of the game. You know you have to send in his rookie reserve. Do you give him the green light to shoot? Do you make him give it away? Or maybe, just try to draw a foul?



TITLE:	OMNI-PLAY BASKETBALL (End-View, Side-View, SBA & College League Modules)
SYSTEMS:	Amiga, C-64, IBM (soon)
# PLAYERS:	1-2
PRICE:	$49.95 (Amiga) $34.95 (C-64)
DESIGNER:	Ed Ringler
PUBLISHER:	SportTime Costa Mesa, CA

It's all up to the player in **SportTime**'s new basketball simulation, *Omni-Play™ Basketball (BB)*. *BB* presents the player with the ability to be the coach, the general manager, and the star player in this unique five-on-five full court basketball game which allows for expandability in the future. Further, through **SportTime**'s new OMNI-PLAY System, add-on option modules have been designed so that the gamer will be able to add new features to the original program. Presently, *BB* provides the gamer with the ability to play in either the SportTime Basketball Association "SBA" or the "College League" (optional) in the "End-View" or "Side-View" (optional) Modes, thus providing four really different abstracts of play. As more option modules become available this number will obviously increase.

Kentucky Fried Basketball (The Franchise)

As owners of a newly formed franchise, players begin with a twelve man roster consisting of aging veterans and young rookies. As the general manager, players make trades, bring up promising young rookies from the minors, and retire veteran players. Expansion teams (which all players start out with) have 250 trading points initially. Trading points may be used to send one's players/team to training camp for improvement or to bring up players from the minor leagues. Of course, the most important use of trading points is in trading players. In order to trade a player, players must have a base amount of 50 trading points to cover the arbitration fee. The "SportTime Administration" is the computerized governing body of your league. This AI driven "Administration" makes sure that all trades between teams are fair and equal. You can only trade one player at a time and you can only trade a guard for a guard, a forward for a forward, etc. (an unfortunate loss of realism). Trading may be expensive, but it is more immediately effective than using a training camp or bringing up rookies.

At the conclusion of a season, teams are awarded trading points, depending upon their records (i.e. the winner of the "SBA" Trophy receives 50 trading points and the last place team receives 1200.). This system gives the underdogs the best possible chance to improve their team's performance for the next season (**Hint:** One of the nefarious strategies this reviewer used to improve and speed-up game results was to run the first couple of seasons by computer without watching or playing the games. When lousy records were accumulated, trading points were also accumulated. Thus, giving an edge for training and trading of the team and players when he personally took over.).

Bench Mark (Coaching Options)

As a "coach", one calls the plays and makes the substitutions; decides whether or not a given player is shooting too much and should be taken out of the game; selects offensive and defensive coaching options; and can either set the line-up oneself or allow the computer to pick the line-up best suited for the game's most

(Continued on page 62)





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The King's Quest Companion

Excerpts from an Intriguing New Book by Peter Spear

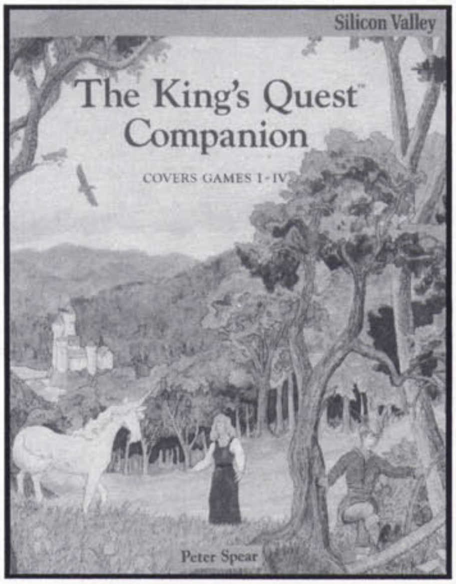
In The King's Quest Companion *(published by Osborne-McGraw Hill Books, $14.95, and available at fine bookstores wherever CGW* is sold), Peter Spear weaves together a variety of writing styles and literary types in order to offer game hints, background material and interesting fiction on the "King's Quest" universe (based upon the "King's Quest" series from **Sierra On-Line**. *Where other books about games have offered straightforward walk-throughs, maps and hints,* The King's Quest Companion *offers perspective on the philosophy and folklore behind the games, in addition to the standard fare of hints and tips one has come to expect from the genre. Here are some of the passages which the editors of* CGW *found both interesting on its own merit and illustrative of what* The King's Quest Companion *has to offer to our readers.*

Quest for the Crown

Spear walks the reader through the first King's Quest *adventure using the artifice of discovering "The Chronicles of Daventry" as told by one Derek Karlavaegen. As the wise reader will recognize in this brief section from Chapter 2 ("Quest for the Crown"), the fiction provides both a readable story and the hints necessary to solve the puzzles.*

The only leads to the missing treasures the young knight had to go on were slim. One: the dwarf who had taken the magic shield had been seen disappearing into a hole in the ground. Two: the shape-changing witch, who had stolen the chest of gold, escaped on her broomstick into the clouds, clouds that clung to the peaks above Daventry, solid seeming masses that looked like snow-cornices, impossible outcroppings poised out from the mountains with no support. Three: the nameless sorcerer who had absconded with the mirror of Merlin had said it would be kept in a safe place, and guarded by some fearsome beast. There were no easy answers in those facts, but that was all anyone knew about the mystery.

To these facts, as lightweight as fiction, Graham added some home-brewed observation. "My daddy used to tell me, 'Boy, if I have learned anything in my life, I have learned this; When in doubt, or in trouble, Pick up anything that is not nailed down, and, if it is, check for loose nails or boards. Check carefully into, under, above, below and behind things. Read everything, you might learn something. Wear clean undergarments, brush after meals and always remember, nothing is as it appears'."



With all of this in mind, Graham took inventory of what he had. He discovered nothing. That meant he had to get some food, some gold or the like with which to buy things, and a weapon. He leaned forward, harder and harder, as he set his plans and sorted his situation. The rock rolled. Graham stumbled but a little and, as he recovered his balance noticed that the rolling stone had revealed a hole. "Well, it's time to heed some of Daddy's advice," he said to the trees, and looking into the hole, he saw what appeared to be a dagger. So it was, and while taking it, he breathed, "Thank you, Father," a note of respect creeping into his voice.

"I sure hope this is an omen."

A Magical Primer

In the third chapter of The King's Quest Companion, *Spear uses the same type of fictional approach to walk the reader through* King's Quest II: Romancing the Throne. *In the fourth chapter, "A Magical Primer", from which the following section has been excerpted, he introduces the magical spells from* King's Quest III: To Heir Is Human. *The recipe printed here plays an important part in* King's Quest III.

"Teleportation At Random"

Obtain the Following Ingredients:

1 spoonful of salt grains
1 sprig of dried mistletoe
1 smooth rounded stone of unusual color
A Magic Wand

To Prepare the Spell:

1. Grind a spoon of salt in a mortar (with a pestle)
2. Grind the mistletoe in the mortar
3. Rub the stone in the mixture
4. Kiss the stone
5. (Recite this verse)
   With this kiss, I thee impart,
   Power most dear to my heart.
   Take me now from this place hither,
   To another place far thither.
6. Wave the Magic Wand

To cast this spell: Rub The Stone. In a blink you will disappear from where you are and appear in another place. This spell may be used as often as one wishes provided the stone is in your possession.

(Note: This is a powerful and most useful spell. It has been used to avoid danger and peril, and legend claims that it has been used on occasion in the exploration of unknown lands. Be warned however; that which snatches away from one predicament can just as well deposit into another. The spell has been known to leave one where they started. There is one fable that talks about a poor bumpkin who came into possession of such a magic stone. Unprepared to face the dangers of the wilder parts of the world he rubbed the stone at will, poofing himself from place to place in search of wine, women and easy gold. The purveyors of luck were with him for the first few times or so, and the stupid boy, whose name was Bob Jack, flitted from town to beach, across mountains and over the seas. Then, the purveyors of luck seemed to say "Alright Bob Jack, you've won a few; now it's time to lose a few!" When he rubbed again, instead of vista, panorama or treasure, Bob Jack was faced with a hungry lion. Quickly he rubbed the stone again. Oops, he was in a magician's chamber and the mage looked not too delighted with the intrusion. Rub again quick, Bob Jack. This time, up a roaring stream without a paddle. Thus it went. Having used up his good luck, he used up his bad luck until he had no luck left at all and perished. The moral of the fable is; "Even when you rub things the right way, soon you'll rub them the wrong way, and if you do that too often, you'll eventually get rubbed out.")

To Heir Is Human

For those who want a more linear narrative of the third game in the series, Spear presents the walk-through of King's Quest III: To Heir Is Human *as an*

interview with the protagonist, Prince Alexander.

Question: *You must have been scared that Manannan would return and catch you red-handed, weren't you?*

Of course I was! I may be self-taught, but I'm not stupid. But at that point I wasn't too worried that he would return just then.

Question: *Oh? Why was that?*

My master was a man of extremely fixed and regular habits. He would rise at exactly the same time each day. Likewise he would retire to bed each night at the same time, accompanied by the same three fingers of the same awful brandy that his taste favored. When Manannan slept, it was for precisely the same period of time, and when he travelled, he always returned at the same time. It was as if he were a clockwork person with gears that repeated himself eternally.

Manannan kept in his house a magical clock unlike any I have ever read about. It was similar to an hour-glass in that it would measure a certain short period of time and then begin again, then again, and again , for as many times as you might count. The sorcerer kept the device, he would say, as a curiosity, for it measured the passing of time in an interval unknown to our kind. He told me once—why, I do not know—that it was created by another race, one that came before the human, or after; he was not sure which.

Over time, I came to see the strange clock as a way to measure the man himself. His bath always took two measures of the odd time, his studies eighteen, and his sleep twenty-five—the same as his travels. It was because I knew this of Manannan that I wasn't worried that he would return just then. I knew that if I could keep track of time, as measured by the unhuman device, then my master could not catch me unawares.

Manannan would not return for some while yet. I used what time I dared to continue my household search. From the kitchen I took my favorite clay bowl from a shelf, and a wooden spoon and sharp knife from the rack next to the fireplace. As I passed through the dining room, I retrieved an old cup from upon the table. Manannan's dining room is large enough for a score of people to eat, yet my master always ate alone under the eternal gaze of a stuffed moose head. I will always consider that a most curious sight.

I took what I had gathered to my sparsely furnished room, and I hid it all under my bed (a cot really). I was sure the wizard would not search for them there, even if he noticed them missing. Then, I went to catch the cat for *its* contribution to my future.

She was in the wizard's tower; she could have been just about anywhere, but she was on the third floor playing with a dead fly. It took several attempts, and many more scratches before I got her, but I was able to hold on to her long enough to take some fur. The unnameable cat gave me an extra scratch as she squirmed out of my hands, but the spell ingredient was mine.

As were the fly wings. I recalled that the spell for flying like a fly needed a pair of those wings, so I took the fly to get the wings. Yuk, but in a good cause . . . saving my hide. I hid the fur and fly wings under my bed with everything else.

Grave Matters

A travelogue advising readers about venturing into graveyards is the literary device utilized in Chapter 7 to prepare the reader for King's Quest IV: The Perils of Rosella. *The following is a brief section of narrative which includes some sound advice for adventurers and one of the many humorous epitaphs to be encountered in the chapter.*

Cemeteries change much when the sun is gone; what seems normal and mundane by day turns supernatural and ghastly by night. Then the restless dead haunt between the crypts and moan their ways between the tombstones. Zombies search for fresh flesh and human brains. In all, it is a most enchanting chance to experience death without ever having to cross over to the other side yourself.

If you are intrigued by a darkside sojourn, do remember to carry along some protection. Garlic, religious symbols, or prayer offer good security for many, but if you have none of these, black scarabs can be obtained occasionally from witches, hags, or other magic users. These, too, offer sufficient protection from the undead. Prices vary from gold coins or simple tasks, to various parts of living anatomy, so do be careful to know the price before you agree to buy. In any event, heed this warning: Do not enter the cemetery at night without protection. Zombies, ghouls and ghosts may be fun and exciting to watch, but you wouldn't want to become their dinner. If you have no protection, leave before dark.

Within this grave do lie,
Back to back, my wife and I;
When the last trump the air shall fill,
If she gets up, I'll just lie still.

Encyclopedia of Daventry

One of the most fascinating portions of The King's Quest Companion *is the "Encyclopedia of Daventry". In this fascinating resource Spear notes the specific game each encyclopedic entry refer-*

(Continued on page 84)

More Than A House of Cards

Software Toolworks' "Cribbage King/Gin King"

by Michael S. Lasky



TITLE:	Cribbage King/Gin King
SYSTEMS:	IBM
# PLAYERS:	1
PRICE:	$59.95
DESIGNER:	Donald Laabs
PUBLISHER:	Software Toolworks 19808 Nordhoff Place Chatsworth, CA 91311

There are two types of Cribbage players: those that play the game and those that play the game fanatically. *Cribbage King*, **Software Toolworks**' computer card game package, is for the fanatics . . . and for novices as well!

The game can be either keyboard or mouse driven and can be customized. Game parameters can be set to full games of 121 points or quicker games of 61 points. The documentation is so clear and well-written that it should be a standard by which other game manuals are judged. This is matched beautifully with context-sensitive online help.

Scores accrue rapidly in cribbage, so a scorekeeping pegboard is always used. In *Cribbage King*, a 61 hole board is graphically depicted. In EGA and VGA modes, even the wood tones of the board are depicted. Since only one hand can be depicted on screen at any one time, however, the game design only allows solitaire play (human-against-machine). Too often, these types of games become predictable very quickly to the player, but designer Donald W.Laabs, cleverly created seven unique computer personalities to play against, or even get different advice from. While cribbage itself is best played by two competitors, *Cribbage King* can handle up to four (one human and three computer) and there is a menu to select the various computer opponents, each with a brief on-line description of their playing capabilities.

Shark is the toughest opponent (natch!), but Mrs. Bass will give you a run for your money. Alfie is a goof and you can easily take advantage of him. Then, there is Lady Ames, Lord Ainsley, Chesley, and Reggie. So veddy, veddy British, because, after all, Cribbage is of English origin.

The cut for deal goes to the low card, but you can even override that if you want. Counting of points after each deal is critical and if you over or undercount, the difference between that and the actual score goes to your opponent. This is the Muggins option.

Some Features Optional

If you don't like a particular rule, you can turn it off. If you don't like the sound and special effects (like the Las Vegas-style shuffle and deal), you can shut them off. If you decide you want a different player in the middle of game or a different advisor, a simple touch of the mouse button or a function key and the game is made to order, once again.

Graphics are clear and crisp even in CGA, the minimum graphics board requirement. But, of course, EGA and VGA offer even more lifelike depictions of the cards, the pegboard and other artwork. The sound effects are limited to shuffling and scoring tones.

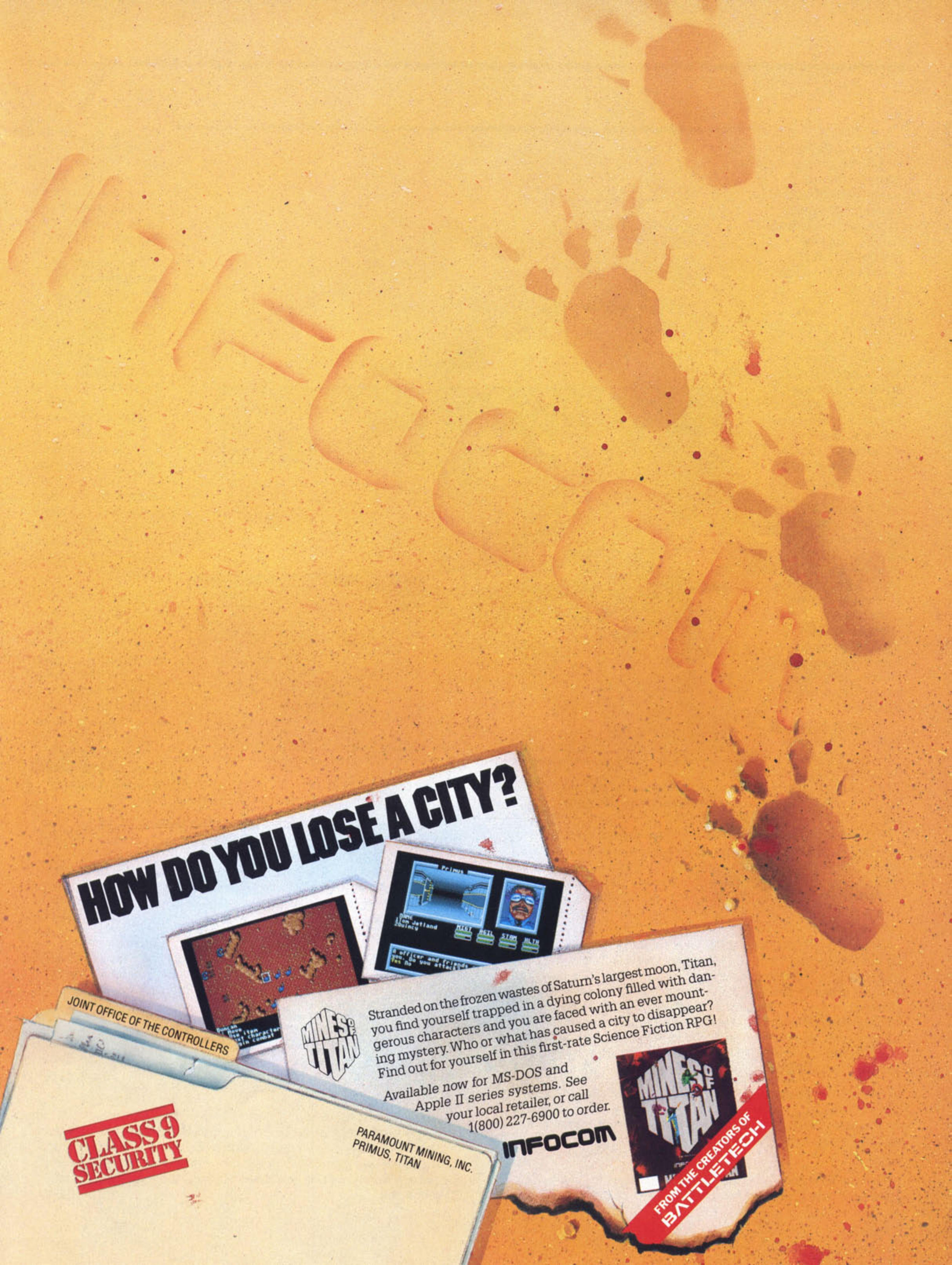
Shuffle options allow for regular random shuffling and a replay with the same deck in the exact order from the previous game. This is as close as one can come to playing against another human opponent. Each can then take turns at the computer and not see the other's cards.

In addition, a unique "User Supplied Cards" setting lets you enter the cards you are actually dealing from a regular deck. This proved to be somewhat of a hassle since one must carefully input the card number and first letter of each card suit in order to give the computer the correct information.

Each computer personality is different from the next and fun to play with. But much of the advice they offer is too machine-like and often calculatingly wrong. I found it best not to take their suggestions concerning which cards to throw too seriously. This is not to say, however, that novices cannot learn from them until they can intuitively do it on their own.

Cribbage King is the first computerized card game I've played that does not eventually bore me with the predictability of the computer opponents. Although it follows all the rules of the actual game closely and moves with the swiftness of mano-a-mano playing, it still offers a mar-

(Continued on page 58)

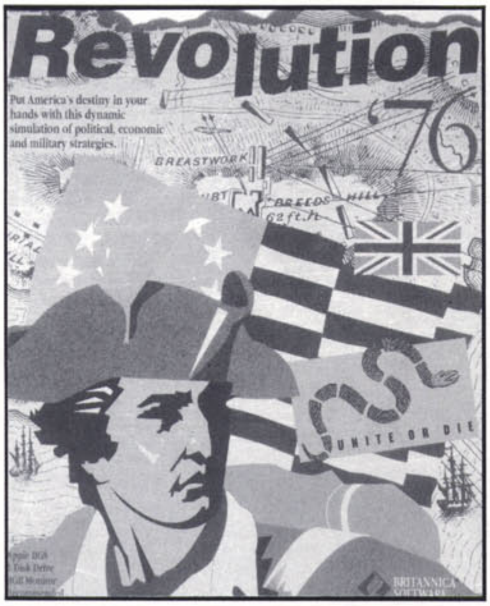

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FROM THE CREATORS OF BATTLETECH

Alan Emrich is the former publisher of Fire & Movement and has considerable seniority in playtesting and managing conventions for the board wargame hobby. This is his first article for CGW.

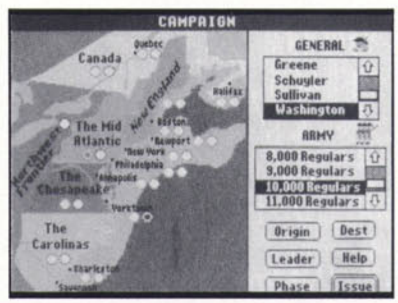
Run For Your Fife

Britannica's "Revolution '76"

by Alan Emrich



TITLE:	Revolution '76
SYSTEM:	Apple IIGS with 1.25 MB
PRICE:	$49.95
DESIGNER:	Ed Bever
PUBLISHER:	Britannica Software San Francisco, CA



When one is an Apple IIGS owner, one naturally laments the low number of "GS specific" games available. When one is a computer *wargamer*, this is doubly true. Fortunately, *Revolution '76* alleviates some of this drought.

Play begins with governmental organization. On the first turn, the player automatically constitutes the Second Continental Congress, so this phase amounts to appointing leaders to chair four important committee posts: Army, Navy, Treasury and Foreign Office.

On future turns, the player will have the options of declaring independence, confederating the states, creating a strong executive to manage the war, reforming the economy, or reassigning the country's leaders.

The second phase in each turn involves administration. Here you set the tax level (creating instant unpopularity) and establish the policy regarding Tories. You can do anything from socializing with to persecuting the Tories. It is usually better to *prosecute* them within the law rather than *persecute* them beyond the law, however.

Recruiting patriotic lads is the next major activity. Since regulars tend to disappear each year, the new crops of militia and Continental Army soldiers are vital to the war effort. The major difference between the two is that the militia begins the game with pretty poor training and has limited movement, while the Continental Army soldiers have a liberal enough movement rate to allow players to mass the required numbers to actually *win* battles. On the down side, of course, is the fact that one must *pay* to raise the Continental Army.

One must also decide how much support to give to privateers. These "patriotic heroes" are nefarious villains as far as British merchants are concerned, since their activities both raise the insurance rates for seafarers and get more Whigs elected to Parliament.

The last step before actually fighting the war is dealing with the National Debt. One decides just how high one is willing to push the debt in order to supply the army and build American Frigates. The more demanded during this phase, the more ruinous inflation can be in the long run.

War is fought via area movement in five areas with six cities to move between. Unlike the historical commanders in 1776, the player knows exactly where the British are, where they are moving, and what their strength is. It does not take long to get a feel for the size force (in Regulars and Militia), the level of training, and the amount of supplies it will take to stand a fair chance of defeating the hated lobster backs.

Unfortunately, since each moving unit requires a general and only one general can command in a given area, this means the player must perform a political juggling act. When more than one group converges for a decisive battle, some of the generals who must, of necessity, be removed from command may become alienated enough to defect to the British.

Of course, winning battles is what the game is all about. The computer informs the player of each battle's outcome and automatically retreats the losing forces. The profound effects which the results of the war have on American and British domestic politics, plus America's foreign diplomacy, makes battles quintessential to winning or losing the game. Success is contingent on carefully selecting only battles which can be won, rather than marching to the beat of the local politicians.

Each turn/year ends with the Diplomacy phase where the player sends John Adams and Benjamin Franklin abroad to woo France, Holland, Spain, Britain and other European Powers.

When the war does end, on whatever note (surrender, pardons, autonomy, independence or expansion), a victory schedule is displayed. Added and subtracted to the status described at the end of the war is: current patriot morale, economic situation, strength of the American government, foreign support, the length of the war, etc.

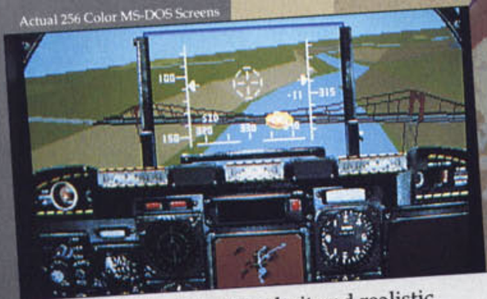
The "victory schedule" for *Revolution '76* is extremely clear. The game offers depth, challenge and one thing that more games should have, replay value. Experimenting with new policies and strategies is a great deal of the fun. *Revolution '76* is what IIGS owners had hoped to see more of when they purchased their machines. **CGW**

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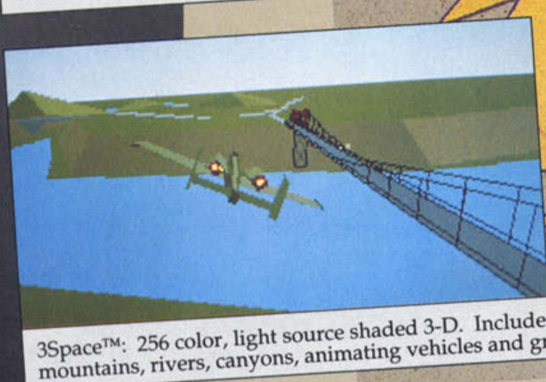
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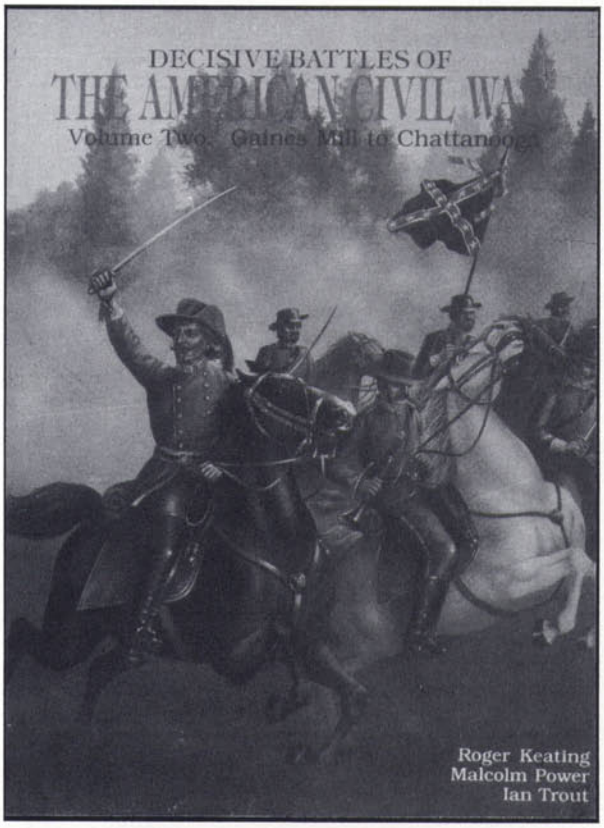
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Decisive Battles of the American Civil War: Volume II

Strategic Studies Group's Game System Revisited

by Jay C. Selover

Not too long ago, I wrote a review about a game and included the line, "Few games have ever been so difficult for me to review as this one. I have dragged myself back to the computer time and again . . . . and can now enjoy the relief of being able to put the game up . . . for a while." The game was *Decisive Battles of the American Civil War: Volume II* (*DBACW2*), which I reviewed in its Apple II 64K embodiment (CGW #54). Therefore, what more cruel assignment could the editors of this magazine offer than to give me another crack at the same game? This time, however, I have been asked to look at the recent IBM release which includes EGA graphics. Given a chance to redeem myself, I must admit that the sheer enjoyment of fighting on the beautifully rendered battlefields of this version virtually offsets the frustration that I continue to feel about the player's control of his forces in this "absolutely true to life" simulation of command effectiveness (and non-effectiveness).



TITLE:	Decisive Battles of the American Civil War: Volume II: Gaines Mill to Chattanooga
SYSTEMS:	Apple II, C-64, IBM
REVIEWED:	IBM with EGA
PRICE:	$40.00
DESIGNERS:	Roger Keating, Malcolm Power, and Ian Trout
PUBLISHER:	Strategic Studies Group Drummoyne, NSW, AUSTRALIA

Background

DBACW2 is **SSG**'s second offering in their series of American Civil War titles, with this game covering five battles from mid-1862 through the end of 1863 (i.e. Gaines Mill, Stones River, two Gettysburg scenarios, Chickamauga, and Chattanooga). The game uses brigades as the units of maneuver and turns which represent one hour. The system uses an orders phase at the start of each turn where players can check the status of their army and issue orders to particular units and formations. Movement and combat routines which follow during the ensuing "action phase" are all handled by the computer. Then, the computer metes out casualties based on well-defined parameters of the firing units, targets, range, terrain, etc. Combat effects include actual casualties, losses in morale, and eventually, shattered and routed units. In addition, individual leaders from the divisional level on up can also become casualties or be captured. Movement is directed by the player in terms of objectives (victory hexes or enemy units), but is handled by the computer in terms of the actual hex-by-hex path to be followed.

As is typical for SSG games, the system places significant (and realistic) constraints on the player which limit his ability to interact with his army to that which the historical commander was able to exercise. The player is personally represented on the field by the commander's icon and his orders to subordinate formation commanders are subject to the same perils faced in history (orders may not even be possible for some of the more distant subordinates who may have wandered out of command range). Orders are sent to Corps and Divisional commanders and, if received, will be interpreted and carried out by the subordinate commanders (all played by the computer). The subordinates will, in turn, order the movement and combat of the actual brigades on the map.

The entire game system is so highly realistic in placing the gamer in the field general's shoes and hamstrings the player so effectively with his historical limitations that my one major complaint (voiced in my prior review and reiterated here) is that history is no fun. My presence is always required everywhere on the battlefield at the same time; my subordinates constantly misread or ignore my orders; my formations move into position with the kind of slow plodding that makes you pull out your hair; and my troops seem to break and run at the first sound of gunfire! Closer to the point, and a bit more seriously, I continue to have trouble discerning the effect that the individual player has on the outcome of the battle. Each scenario starts with formations in position and with standing orders. Therefore, the battle is about to commence, even if he does absolutely nothing with his personal commander throughout the battle. Further, within the battle, events tend to unfold along roughly historical lines, thanks to one's computerized subordinates.

(Continued on page 54)

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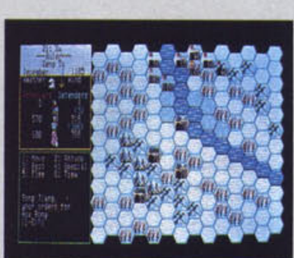
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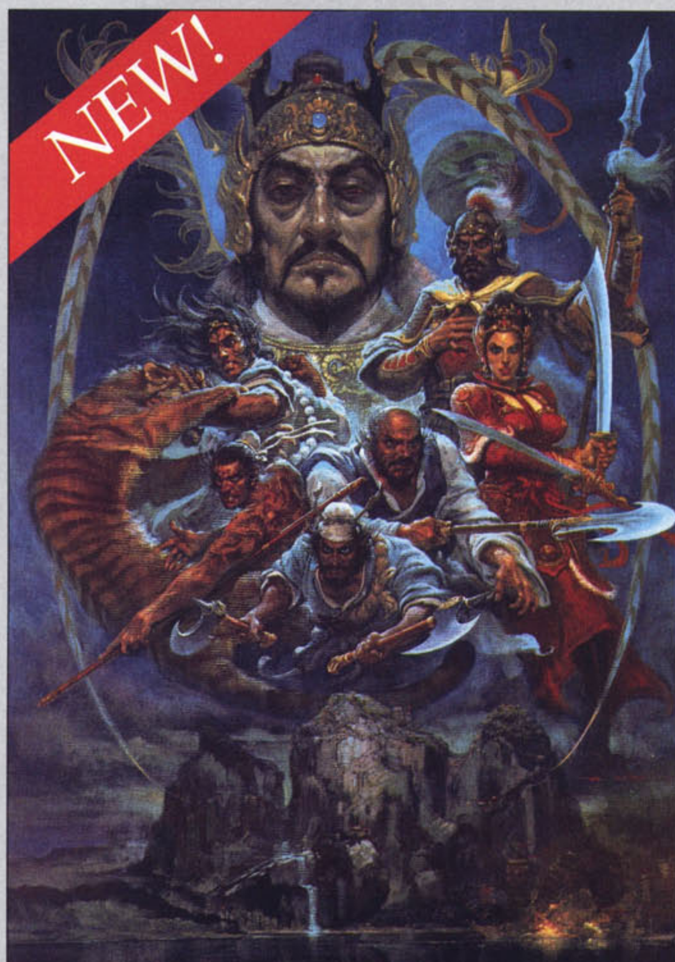








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Torture and Destruction for Fun and Profit

Interstel's "Star Fleet II: Krellan Commander"

by M. Evan Brooks

NAME:	Star Fleet II: Krellan Commander
SYSTEM:	IBM (512K)
PRICE:	$59.95
DESIGNERS:	Dr. Trevor Sorenson and Mark Baldwin
PUBLISHER:	Interstel Webster, TX



Star Fleet II: Krellan Commander is **Interstel**'s long-awaited (over 2 years!) sequel to *Star Fleet I*. However, this time the player's role is that of the evil Krellan aggressor—an aggressive alien species dedicated to the destruction of "truth, justice, and the United Galactic Way". Intricate and richly textured, *Star Fleet II* offers an interesting, albeit flawed, perspective of tactical and strategic space conflict.

However, *Star Fleet II: Krellan Commander* is not really a Krellan simulation. Instead, the player takes on the role of a UGA (United Galactic Alliance) commander in a simulator. Why this one-step farther removal concept was utilized is not explained (but probably revolves around ethical considerations). In effect, one plays a UGA commander playing a Krellan. There are options involving questioning captured personnel (torture is very effective) and destruction of entire planets (a quick way to achieve the Krellan Medal of Honor), but you don't have to feel guilty about it.

Documentation

The documentation is extensive but incomplete. The "Krellan Battle Manual" provides over 140 pages of documentation. This is supplemented by an "Officer's Manual" and a quick-reference chart. It would appear, therefore, that these should be more than sufficient for play.

However, the documentation is somewhat convoluted in nature and can be confusingly incomplete. For example, while the documentation delineates how to *utilize* the automatic targeter navigation mode, it does not clearly state the steps to *engage* it. This reviewer spent 3 hours struggling over this before realizing that one had to turn the engine on in order to engage the targeter. Manual navigation is a skill that requires extensive "training", but one will have to learn this by trial and error. The documentation lacks "Examples of Play" and "Lessons Learned". However, **Interstel** has prepared the "Tutorial Disk and Training Manual"—for an additional sum of $14.95.

Accessible via the main program, the tutorials will answer most of one's questions—both movement and combat. However, the tutorial was unavailable when the program was initially released and this reviewer does not appreciate the trend towards programs needing additional "enhancements" merely to understand and utilize the game mechanics. Some gamers have indicated that they have had no problem with the documentation. While such gamers are to be commended for their intuitive insights, this reviewer feels that if a tutorial and training manual is needed, it should be included with the main program and *not* sold as an add-on. Since the tutorial was still in the process of being written, many "unintended features" in the program will presumably be explained in the add-on manual. These include certain omissions, errors and outright flaws which may be fatal to game play. Thus, the documentation is extensive, incomplete and frustrating.

Graphics

Interstel has been known in the past for their challenging game play, not graphics. While *Star Fleet II* is a colorful product, no one will ever accuse it of being on the "envelope" of graphic design. The screen displays use a variety of colors, but the icons are primitive (e.g. control-type characters used to represent different ships on the radar displays as in "v" for a frigate, "w" for a destroyer). In fact, a "@" sign represents a black hole in space. It may be functional, but it's sure not awe-inspiring.

Numerous menus and displays are available—main command menu, navigation display, engineering, planetary invasion screens, etc. However, even with a 20MHz machine, the shift between screen displays is amazingly slow; **Interstel** attributes this to the many calculations/computations that the machine is making. This reviewer simply notes the slowness of execution. The design rationale may be significant, but the slow calculations impact poorly on the user perspective.

Game Play

Game play—the strength of **Interstel** products—is present in *Star Fleet II*, although a number of bugs undermine maximum enjoyment. The program should be loaded on a hard disk. The second disk consists of one executable file and virtually fills the disk. It may be difficult to read such a disk and require numerous attempts to back up or place the program on a hard drive. The compressed file reading difficulty is known to **Interstel** and they are attempting to correct this deficiency.

However, this is but one of many flaws. Overall, the program resembles a Persian rug. Such a carpet is always made with

(Continued on page 42)

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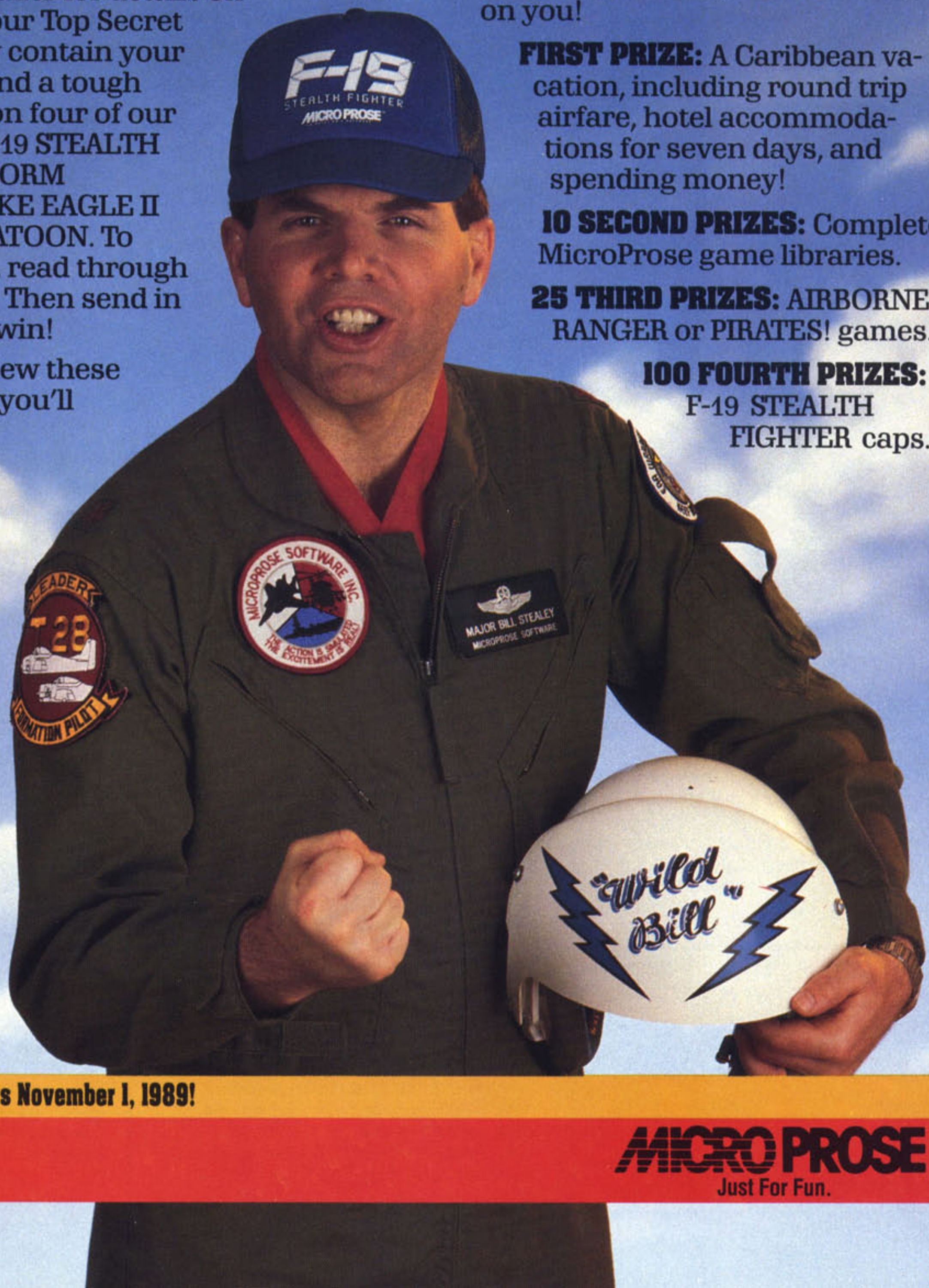
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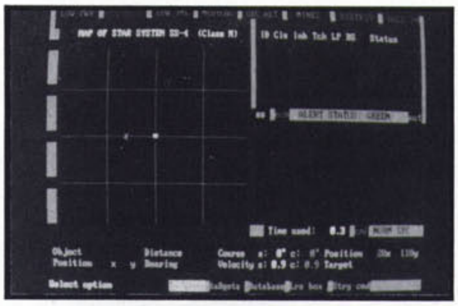
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(Continued from page 40)

Star Fleet II

an intentional flaw (since nothing is perfect except Allah), but the rich texture and beauty of the product overwhelm the end-user. *Star Fleet II* has both the rich texture and beauty, but it is surrounded by so much cheap carpeting that one wonders if the end can ever justify the means.

Beginning with a battlecruiser, one will be promoted to commander of a task force (battlecruiser plus four destroyer escorts) and on to admiral in charge of eventual planetary invasion fleets. Each level of command (from Altern to Admiral) consists of five missions, which in turn, begin at a simple level and evolve. However, at the lower levels, there is a certain sameness—destroy a starliner/warship, capture a starliner/warship. While **Interstel** personnel can finish the first three levels in an evening, this reviewer spent three weeks of play merely to rise to level three. Although one can play any mission (using DEMO mode), successful missions will not be saved for career advancement unless one starts from the beginning. Also, attempting a level seven invasion is made very difficult in demo mode, since one's legions are relatively inexperienced, unlike those that would be present if one had progressed "through the ranks".



An early mission involves finding an enemy starbase. However, one's ship can only long-range scan one-quarter of a solar system. Therefore, one has to adjust continuously in order to check the potential star systems. Luckily, the starbase is normally located in an inhabitable system (green or cyan in color), so the search is somewhat limited, but the process can become tedious.

The find/capture of different ships can also become repetitive (starliner-freighter/light cruiser/heavy cruiser). The capture of enemy warships, however, offers a *definite* learning experience. Save the game immediately after contact. Since enemy warships do not surrender, one must destroy their shields *without* destroying the ship—a delicate operation to say the least. Using tractor beams to capture the enemy vessel offers its own danger, as well. This reviewer captured a light cruiser by tractor beam (which involves lowering the shields), only to discover that the enemy ship still had sufficient strength to reduce the Krellan vessel to space slag.

Certain lessons must be acknowledged. Occasionally, an instruction will tell the user to "Insert Disk 2 in Drive C". Since drive C is usually a hard drive, this does present some difficulty. However, the message is an error and can safely be ignored. More important are problems associated with destroyer escort formations. The "system search" formation allows a maximum reconnaissance of a new solar system. However, system search only works intra-system. If one places his vessels in system search and then enters hyperspace, the program will eventually lock-up. **Do Not** enter hyperspace in "system search" formation.

When one finally achieves sufficient rank (Centurion) to have four escorts, their usefulness may be limited. While one can order them to disable an enemy vessel by torpedoes, the tendency, with all four firing, is for the ship to be "over-killed". One feels somewhat like the "six million dollar man" with a short circuit in his arm. Optimization, therefore, calls for varied orders to the destroyer escorts (e.g. one on hold fire, two on disable, one on slave to battle cruiser) and then, when an enemy vessel is almost destroyed, pause the game and quickly adjust orders. This is admittedly not an overly elegant strategy, but it does work.

Passwords are part of the protection scheme. The user establishes his own password, but the program sometimes unilaterally adjusts one's password after four missions. Unlike *Star Fleet I* which had a Fleet Manager option to access all records, *Star Fleet II*'s "Manager" only allows one to delete a record. The "quick fix" is to use a password beginning with an early letter of the alphabet, since the computer merely adjusts the first letter by moving it eight letters up the alphabet. Of course, if one is unfortunate enough to have used a password beginning with the letter "s", he finds himself running out of alphabet and having the new password begin with a control-character. Hence, it would more than likely not be accessible without a corrected disk. Fortunately, this "feature" has been corrected on later releases.

When this reviewer reached level three, garbage characters would appear on the screen in the message boxes and remain on the navigational maps. These errors do not affect the computer's play, but they do impact upon the player's conceptualization. Any computer game requires a willing suspension of belief and such errors quickly bring the player back to a sad reality. Finally, do not access planetary maps until a corrected edition is available. Access of such maps may occasionally engender computer lock-up.

Conclusions

Star Fleet II is a richly detailed simulation. With consumers waiting for it for over two years, it is apparent that a "Rush to Publish" overcame any other considerations. **Interstel** is aware of the numerous problems and is working diligently to correct all of them. They will replace user disks with working copies. However, when such corrections will be finalized is still unknown. For this reviewer, at this time, the bottom line is—*Star Fleet II*? No, *Star Dreck I*. Fortunately, many gamers have either not been plagued by the problems described above or have found their way around them and love the product. Whatever one's feeling about the game, *Star Fleet II: Krellan Commander* is not quite the breakthrough gamers had been hoping for.

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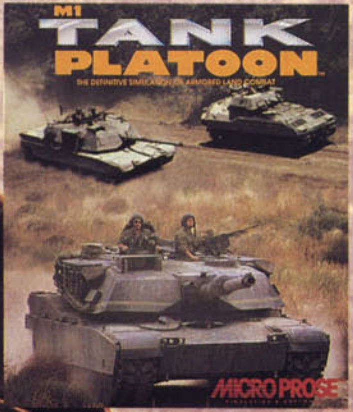


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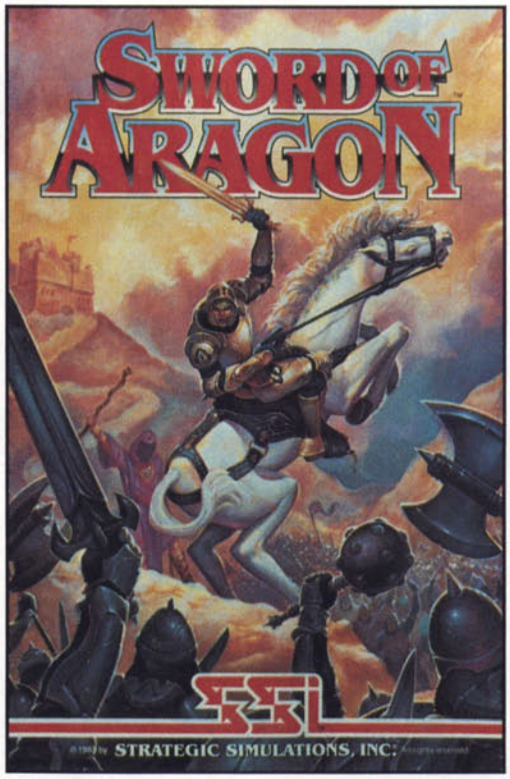
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Just For Fun.

A Strong Right Arm

SSI's "Sword of Aragon"

by Biff Kritzen



TITLE:	Sword of Aragon
SYSTEM:	IBM
# PLAYERS:	One
PRICE:	$39.95
DESIGNERS:	Russell Shilling & Kurt Myers
PUBLISHER:	SSI Sunnyvale, CA

The dying sun was drenching the sky with deepening shades of red as Severian the Conqueror sat overlooking the fortified city of Tetrada. His mount tremored beneath him, nostrils twitching, as the clouds of dust from the seemingly endless, winding column of troops at his rear began blowing over them. The long road that had begun in Aladda, so many years ago, had finally brought them to this final confrontation with the usurping Lucinian IV. The big bay's tail swatted at the ever present flies as Severian signaled for his army to begin deploying for their final night of encampment. By this time tomorrow, the long campaign that had started with the treacherous murder of his father would be ended, one way or the other, and the ground would match the evening sky with its own bloody shades of scarlet.

Sword of Aragon is a fantasy, economic, military wargame that challenges the player to conquer city states, manage the realm's economy, keep the peace, fight off marauding invasions, explore unknown territory, recruit and maintain armies, and, (oh yes), reclaim a throne wrongly usurped by a despotic tyrant who sits at the head of a huge army, camped behind the walls of a heavily fortified city. Piece of cake, right?

The game opens with the player ascending to the throne of Aladda, a small city state that is trying to regain its lost glory as capital of the realm. The economy needs reinvigoration, the army needs recruits and training, and the ruler/player needs seasoning. The first choice to be made is what kind of player to be. The choices include Warrior, Knight, Ranger, Mage, and Priest, each giving the player a different makeup of initial forces, and establishing the costs of the different unit types for recruiting and training purposes. The unit types to choose from, typical of ancient warfare, are infantry, cavalry, archers, mounted infantry, and mounted archers. Each has different strengths, weapon and armor availability, and movement values. It's left to the player to discover the optimal weapon and armor mix for the forces he wants to field. Lots of combinations exist, and it's quite a challenge to maximize a force's fighting ability. Knights will probably field armies with strong, shock cavalry wings; warriors will fight with large masses of spear carrying infantry, supported by divisions of javelin troops; rangers will fight with large bodies of mounted and foot archers, outfitted with a variety of bows and slings; while mages and priests will contest the battleground with large numbers of spellcasters.

Victory on the battlefield will ultimately go to the side that has the best mix of forces and uses the proper tactics for the situation at hand. This fantasy version of "combined arms" is necessary because: attacking fortified cities with foot infantry is doomed to failure without artillery (oops, make that archers and spellcasters) to soften up the defenses first; archers, priests, and mages caught out in the open without infantry and cavalry support will soon be shredded by enemy spearmen; and infantry butting heads with opposing ground troops will never achieve breakthroughs without shock cavalry to punch holes in the enemy lines and help conduct overruns.

After selecting the initial character and forces, it becomes time to take a look at the state of the economy. The economic subgame is an important part of successful campaigning. Troops can't be paid, trained and outfitted with promises. They require gold and there's no deficit spending in Aragon.

Each city's economy is made up with different sectors, based on its geographical location. Seaports rely on trade, cities in the mountains depend on mining, and agriculture is the main product of towns on the plains. Committing money to different areas will increase the revenue brought in and adjustment of the tax rate will fill the coffers. Of course, too high a tax rate will cause a loyalty and popularity decrease in the city and this will negatively impact on production and recruitment. Careful allocation of gold will keep your city thriving and the population happy.

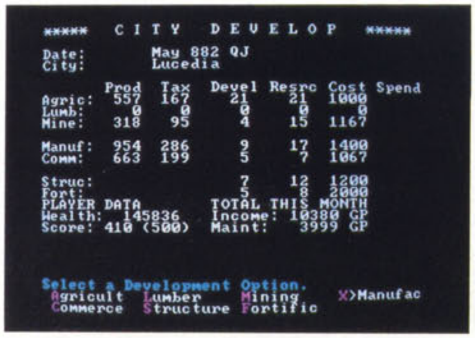
Garrisons are necessary in some of the wilder terrain, and maintenance for the armies all dips into the national treasury. So a good warrior with a lack of appreciation for economic matters will find himself fighting with fewer and fewer troops. Armies don't march and fight on empty stomachs.

Each city has a net economic gain or loss that it adds to the player's overall balance sheet. Thus, more cities conquered means more potential gold for the realm's treasury. The down side to this is that the more cities under the player's control, the higher the corresponding maintenance costs that must be paid.

The above notwithstanding, the game is won and lost on the battlefield. Each turn is represented by a month of game time, so each year will see a series of campaigns launched in the spring and, hopefully, concluded before the onset of winter. Winter weather wreaks havoc on troops caught out in the open in the



Strategic Movement Screen



City Development Screen



Tactical Battle Screen

form of attrition. Each hex moved into will cause a loss of men through desertion, based on the severity of the weather and the terrain moved into. The sight of an army melting away before your very eyes is a most discouraging thing. It's too expensive to recruit, train, and equip an army. To have it undermined by poor planning and disregard for the weather is inexcusable.

As more cities are conquered, and treasuries grow, new armies will be created. Some will be armies of occupation, their chief mission becoming "keeping the peace". Other armies will arise for conquest. These armies will be heavily laden with spearmen and archers, perfect for siege and conquest. The final stages of the game will see all theses armies coming together for one or two final campaigns that will make or break the player.

As important as strategic planning is to the war effort, it's still the "push of the pike" that wins or loses the day on the battlefield. The tactical battle subgame is really the heart of the game. Each unit maneuvers and fights over the different terrain that makes up the realm: rivers; forests, hills, mountains, villages, and fortified towns. The player's divisions move individually and can force march, entrench or fire range weapons as circumstances dictate. Since the enemies vary from area to area, so do their battle tactics. This puts a premium on the proper mix of forces, and their correct deployment and use. Archers and spellcasters should always be entrenched and placed behind a wall of infantry. Cavalry should be positioned on the flanks or behind the lines, kept in reserve for the appropriate time of the battle when a weakened, demoralized foe can be overrun and crushed. Enemies entrenched in towns should be bombarded with spells

(Continued on page 53)

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ASK US ABOUT OUR MONTHLY SPECIALS

See Reader Input Device on page 96

The Categories

Strategy (ST): Games that emphasize strategic planning and problem solving.

Simulation (SI): Games based on first person perspectives of real world environments.

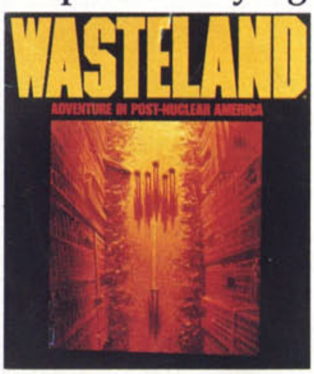
Adventure (AD): Games that allow you to take your alter ego through a storyline or series of events.

Role-Playing Adventures (RP): Adventure games that are based on character development (usually involving attributes).

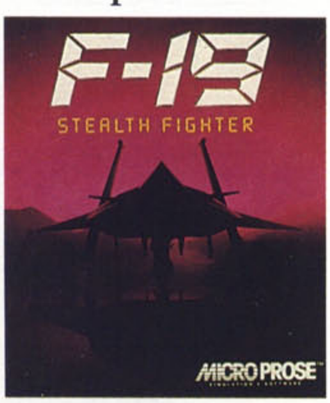
Wargames (WG): Simulations of historical or futuristic warfare from a command perspective.

Action/Arcade (AC): Computer games that emphasize hand-eye coordination and reflexes.

Top Role-Playing



Top Simulation



THE TOP TEN GAMES

No.	Name	Mfg.	Machine	Cat.	Avg. # Resp.	Rating
1.	*F-19 Stealth Fighter*	*MicPr*	*I*	*SI*	*72*	*9.90*
2.	*SimCity*	*Maxis*	*Am,C,I,M*	*ST,SI*	*39*	*9.65*
3.	*Red Storm Rising*	*MicPr*	*C,I*	*SI*	*54*	*9.36*
4.	*Battlehawks 1942*	*LucasFilm*	*Am,I,ST*	*AC,SI*	*70*	*9.29*
5.	*Lords of Rising Sun*	*Cnmwre*	*Am*	*AC,ST*	*47*	*9.23*
6.	*Wasteland*	*EA*	*Ap,C,I*	*RP*	*111*	*9.22*
7.	*Overrun*	*SSI*	*Ap,I*	*WG*	*21*	*9.18*
8.	*Curse of Azure Bonds*	*SSI*	*C,I*	*RP*	*48*	*9.17*
9.	*Pool of Radiance*	*SSI*	*Ap,C,I*	*RP*	*100*	*9.14*
10.	*Ultima V*	*Origin*	*Ap,I*	*RP*	*99*	*9.11*

No.	Name	Mfg.	Machines	Cat.	Avg # Resp.	Rating
11.	Might & Magic II	NwWrld	Ap,C	RP	46	9.04
12.	Bard's Tale III	EA	Ap,C	RP	74	9.03
	Space Quest III	Sierra	I	AD	29	9.03
14.	Romance/3Kngdms	Koei	I	ST,RP	31	8.96
15.	Battles of Napoleon	SSI	Ap,C	WG	31	8.90
16.	NFL Challenge	XOR	I,M	ST	86	8.87
17.	The Magic Candle	Mndcrft	Ap,C,I	RP	43	8.80
18.	Genghis Khan	Koei	I	ST,RP	32	8.79
	Project Stealth Ftr	MicPr	C	SI	29	8.79
20.	Battletech	Infocom	Am,I	RP	48	8.77
	Fire Brigade	Panther	Am,I,M	WG	22	8.77
22.	Airborne Ranger	MicPr	C,I	AC	74	8.76
23.	King's Quest IV	Sierra	I,GS,ST	AD	58	8.75
	Neuromancer	Interplay	Ap,C	AD	32	8.75
25.	Falcon	SpcHolo	Many	SI	61	8.73
26.	Rocket Ranger	Cnmwre	Am	AC,AD	74	8.71
27.	Battlechess	Interplay	Am,I	ST	58	8.68
28.	Typhoon of Steel	SSI	Ap,C	WG	43	8.67
29.	Ballistyx	Psygns	Am,ST	AC	20	8.65
	Police Quest II	Sierra	I,GS	AD	43	8.65
	Zany Golf	EA	Am,I,ST	AC	31	8.65
32.	Sword of Sodan	Discvry	Am,GS	AC	27	8.63
33.	Nobunaga's Ambition	Koei	I	ST,RP	51	8.53
34.	Carrier Command	Rainbird	Am,I,ST	AC,WG	49	8.51
	Panzer Strike	SSI	Ap,C	WG	68	8.51
36.	Silent Service	MicPr	Many	SI	257	8.50
37.	TV Sports Football	Cnmwre	Am	AC,ST	51	8.49
38.	Hostage	Mndscpe	Am,I,ST	AC	28	8.47
39.	688 Attack Sub	EA	I	SI,ST	48	8.42
40.	Arkanoid	Dsc/Taito	Many	AC	69	8.38
	Wings of Fury	Brdbnd	Ap	AC	52	8.38
42.	Strike Fleet	EA	Ap,C,I	WG	79	8.37
43.	Leisure Suit Lry II	Sierra	I,GS,ST	AD	52	8.31
44.	Modem Wars	EA	C,I	ST	24	8.29
45.	Manhunter	Sierra	Many	AD	72	8.25
46.	Police Quest	Sierra	Many	AD	98	8.23
47.	Starglider II	Rainbird	Am,ST	AC	65	8.22
48.	Jack Nicklaus' Golf	Acclde	Am,C,I	AC,ST	28	8.21
	Three Stooges	Cnmwre	Am,C	AC	68	8.21
50.	Battlegroup	SSI	Ap,C	WG	36	8.19
51.	Abrams Battle Tank	EA	I	AC,SI	31	8.16
52.	Tetris	SpcHolo	Many	AC,ST	46	8.13
53.	Stealth Mission	Sublogic	C	SI	36	8.11
54.	Shiloh	SSI	Ap,C,I	WG	54	8.09
	Zork Series	Infocom	Many	AD	218	8.09

THE HALL OF FAME

The Games In CGW's Hall Of Fame Have Been Highly Rated By Our Readers Over Time. They Are Worthy Of Play By All.

CGW Congratulates The Latest Addition To The Hall Of Fame, **Dungeon Master.**

Bard's Tale I
Chessmaster
Dungeon Master
Earl Weaver Baseball
Empire
Gettysburg
Gunship
Kampfgruppe
Mech Brigade
Might & Magic
M.U.L.E.
Pirates
Starflight
Ultima III
Ultima IV
War in Russia
Wizardry

No.	Name	Mfg.	Machines	Cat.	Avg # Resp.	Rating
56.	Faery Tale Adventure	Micllsn	Many	RP	59	8.07
57.	Russia	SSG	Ap,C	WG	61	8.05
58.	Sentinel Worlds	EA	I	RP	71	8.04
	Techno-Cop	Epyx	C	AC	23	8.04
60.	Test Drive II	Acclde	Am,C	AC	42	8.02
61.	WC Leader Board	Access	Many	AC,ST	97	8.00
62.	Leather Goddesses	Infocom	Many	AD	136	7.99
63.	Breach	Omntrnd	Am,M,ST	ST,RP	114	7.98
64.	Enchanter	Infocom	Many	AD	115	7.97
65.	Jordan vs Bird	EA	C,I	AC	47	7.96
66.	Prophecy	Activsn	Am,I	AD	32	7.92
67.	Wizardry V	Sir-Tech	Ap,I	RP	43	7.88
68.	Eternal Dagger	SSI	Many	RP	72	7.85
69.	Rommel	SSG	Ap,C	WG	20	7.80
70.	Halls of Montezuma	SSG	Ap,C,I	WG	44	7.75
71.	Anc Art of War At Sea	Brdbnd	I,M	ST	108	7.74
	Phantasie III	SSI	Many	RP	105	7.74
73.	Phantasie	SSI	Many	RP	147	7.69
74.	Star Saga I	Mstrply	Many	AD	37	7.66
75.	War in Middle Earth	Melbrne	Many	ST	57	7.65
	Speedball	Cnmware	Am,C,I	AC	31	7.65
77.	Bard's Tale II	EA	Many	RP	166	7.64
78.	Grand Prix	Acclde	Am,I	AC	46	7.63
79.	Sorceror	Infocom	Many	AD	71	7.62
	Spellbreaker	Infocom	Many	AD	93	7.62
	Wizard's Crown	SSI	Ap,C,I	RP	133	7.62
82.	Dec. Battles III	SSG	Ap,C	WG	23	7.57
	Hitchhiker's Guide	Infocom	Many	AD	198	7.57
84.	Balance of Power	Mndscpe	Many	ST	70	7.55
	Gold Rush	Sierra	I	AD	20	7.55
86.	Demon Stalkers	EA	C	AC,AD	57	7.54
87.	Shadowgate	Mndscpe	Am,I,M	AD	66	7.53
88.	Quarterstaff	Infocom	M	RP	23	7.52
	Wishbringer	Infocom	Many	AD	81	7.52
90.	Legacy of Ancients	EA	AP,C,I	RP	134	7.50
	Silpheed	Sierra	I	AC	22	7.50
92.	Planetfall	Infocom	Many	AD	139	7.49
93.	Battlecruiser	SSI	Ap,At,C	WG	42	7.48
94.	Reach For Stars	SSG	Many	ST	38	7.45
95.	Autoduel	Origin	Ap	RP	175	7.44
96.	Heroes of the Lance	SSI	Am,C,I	AC,AD	77	7.43
	King's Quest II	Sierra	AP,I	AD	115	7.43
98.	Defender of Crown	Cnmware	Many	AC,ST	253	7.39
99.	Lode Runner	EA	Many	AC	124	7.36
100.	Universe 3	Omntrnd	I	AD	24	7.33

Top Strategy



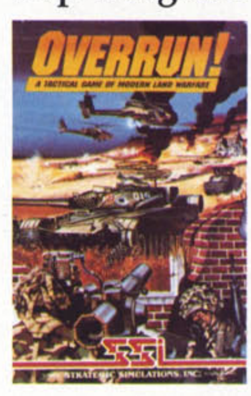
Top Action/Arcade



Top Adventure



Top Wargame



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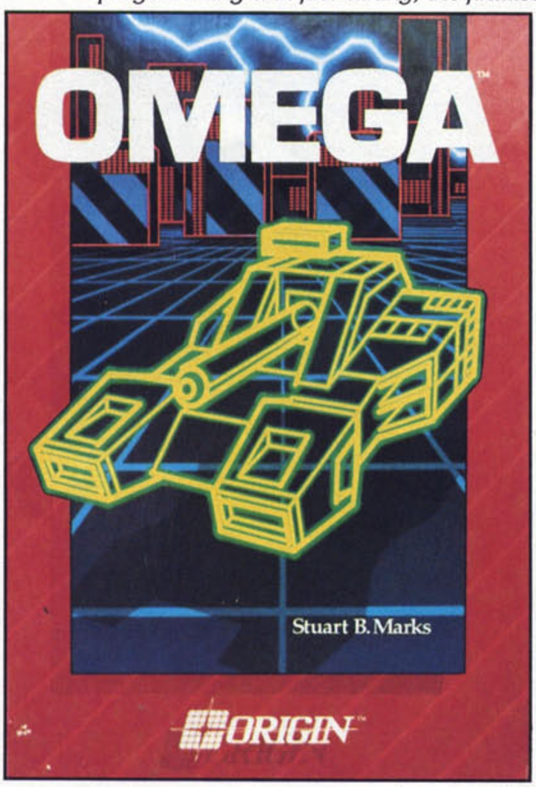
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The Ploys of Thunder

Cybernetic Combat in Origin's "Omega"

by Russell Sipe

A hush fell over the assembled throng as they crowded close to the monitors before them. After dozens and, in many cases, hundreds of hours of programming and fine tuning, the finalists were down to the nitty gritty. The tension could be cut with a knife. DRAGON's creaking treads pulled it around for the final showdown. MUSTANG had a one point lead but DRAGON had him 'lined up'. A flash of light and MUSTANG was smashed into a pile of mis-shapen ginzu knives. All DRAGON had to do was outlast just one of the remaining two robots and claim the prize. But fate was not blowing favorable winds for DRAGON. One of the remaining combatants, SABOTUR, decided to play the role of spoiler with a well aimed shot to the midsection. The smoking DRAGON went down. MUSTANG and DRAGON ended the tournament in a "dead" tie (literally) for the championship.



TITLE:	Omega
SYSTEM:	Apple II, C-64, IBM, Mac, ST
# PLAYERS:	1-?
PRICE:	$49.95
DESIGNER:	Stuart Marks
PUBLISHER:	Origin Systems Londonderry, N.H.

The scene was in the offices of Computer Gaming World and the event was CGW's *Third Annual Robotwar Tournament* held in 1984.

Muse Software's *Robotwar* was a uniquely engaging game back in those days. But, as with any game, time took its toll. Muse Software went out of business, and with it, Robotwar's availability.

Now, the folks at **Origin Systems** have developed an all new and very excellent robot war game entitled *Omega*. To say that *Omega* owes its heritage to *Robotwar* would be almost as much an understatement as it would be to say that *Omega* has greatly improved on the idea. *Omega* has all of the good points of the earlier game plus a whole lot more.

Cybertanks R Us

In *Omega*, you design futuristic cybertanks to fight on simulated battlefields.

You begin the game in a fictitious future as an entry level employee of OSI (Organization of Strategic Intelligence), the world's leader in military cybernetic tank development. The detailed 250+ page documentation is set up as your employee manual. The fiction of OSI is carried out thoroughly, right down to an OSI electronic mail system, which posts more or less humorous notes to you at the beginning of each game.

There are two stages in the design of your cybertank. First you spend what available credits you have to buy the hardware that makes up your tank. This includes your chassis, fuel cells, drive system, weapons, scanners, and (if you can afford it) special items. One of the special items is a Comm-Link which allows tanks to communicate with one another. This opens the door to designing teams of tanks.

The second stage in the design of your cybertank is the development of the tank's AI (artificial intelligence). Herein is the heart of the game. Inexperienced "cybertank engineers" will want to use the pre-designed capsule routines provided in the game (with such descriptive names as KillTank, BeeLineHunt, Panic, and BerserkAttack). You can pick and chose from these preprogrammed routines to produce a complete AI for your robot. More experienced cybertank engineers will want to use the full-featured Cybertank Command Language to develop more efficient routines of their own.

When you have your cybertank built and programmed, you put it up against OSI's predesigned test tanks. There are 12 increasingly sophisticated designs against which you will "test your mettle." If your tank can defeat the test tank in, at least, 7 of 10 one-on-one battles, you will be "promoted" and given a larger budget. The budget is then used to purchase more expensive hardware (drives, weapons, etc.). The more sophisticated the test robot you defeat, the bigger your budget.

Goin' Off To War

The real excitement of *Omega* comes from pitting your designs against those of human opponents. You can take your design and transfer/port/modem it over to any of the other versions of *Omega*: Apple, C-64, IBM/Tandy, Amiga, or Atari ST. You can upload it to BBSs to fight in tournaments. Finally, you can upload your design to the Origin Systems *Omega* BBS and participate in the Official *Origin Systems-Computer Gaming World OMEGA Tournament*. Details of the tournament are included in the game. Deadline for submissions is January 31, 1990. Ongoing results will be printed in Computer Gaming World with the finals hosted by CGW and fully reported in the March 1990 issue of CGW.

Design Tips and Ideas

- The task of designing a winning AI comes down to ac-

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(Continued from page 45)

A Strong Right Arm!

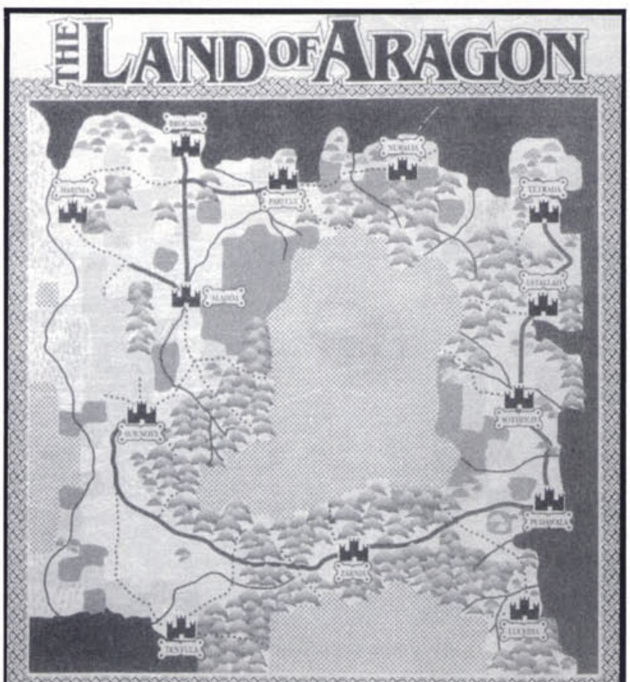
and missiles before any shock assaults are ordered. The defensive value of terrain can really bolster a unit's value, so never try to storm a position without ample preparation, the losses will be too high.

I've only just touched upon the more obvious aspects of gameplay in *Sword*, there is much more to be discovered during the 30-45 hours required to win the game. It's possible to achieve victory in the game without getting a perfect score (500 points), so even when the realm is conquered, there's still a city or two to discover and take, and a lot of those monsters just won't take kindly to defeat, they'll keep coming back for more.

The only negative factor one could mention about the game concerns the interface. *Sword of Aragon* fairly cries out for mouse support. The keyboard interface is somewhat 'clunky' at times. A better design, or mouse support could have eliminated a few unnecessary keystrokes and made gameplay somewhat smoother.

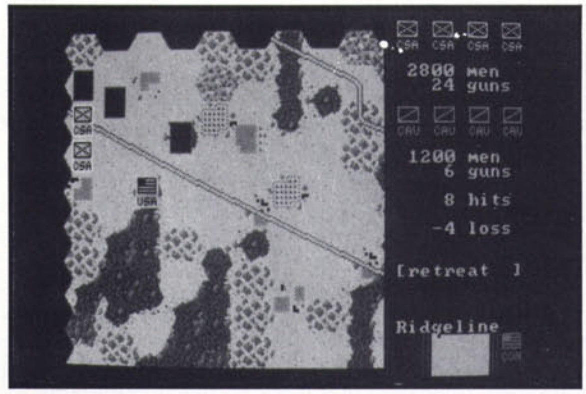
SSI has really developed a winning system in *Sword of Aragon*. By merely changing the unit types from, say, cavalry to armor, and broadening the economic sectors to include different types of manufacturing and trade, they could come up with a game based on more modern warfare. Or by changing the geography, they could aptly simulate the War of the Roses. The possibilities are really endless.

The economic/military system in *Sword* is challenging and ultimately rewarding. There's still nothing like spending a winter quartered in a newly conquered city, running the world as you see fit. Ah, the Divine Right of Kings! **CGW**



(Continued from page 36)

Decisive Battles

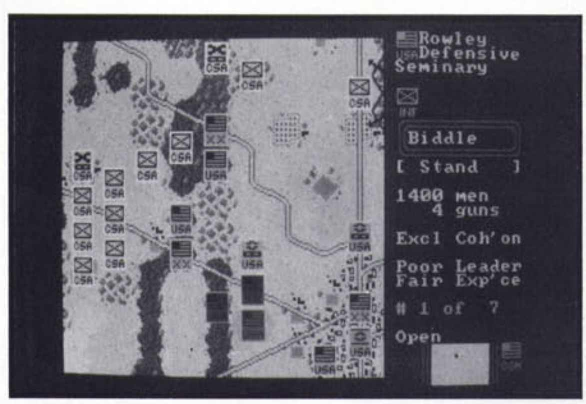


Combat Screen

Graphic Improvements

All of the above, plus a bunch more, can be found in my prior review. What about the specifics of this release—the IBM version? First, my IBM machine is inherently much faster than my Apple, so the very noticeable increase in processing speed and reduced "dead time" was to be expected. Next, the graphics . . . ah, the graphics . . . This is truly what saves this version of the game for me and makes me willing to sit there through playing after playing, just watching the action unfold. With the curious exception of the Chattanooga scenario (What happened, run out of memory?), the maps do not have single hexagonal icons for each terrain type. Therefore, the player gets more of the feel of looking down on a true aerial photograph as he surveys the battlefields. However it was accomplished, the EGA graphics on the IBM are truly a sight to behold.

If my prior review of this game did not put you off completely; you may just have to go out and buy an IBM machine so that you can, at least, properly enjoy the game. **CGW**



Movement Screen

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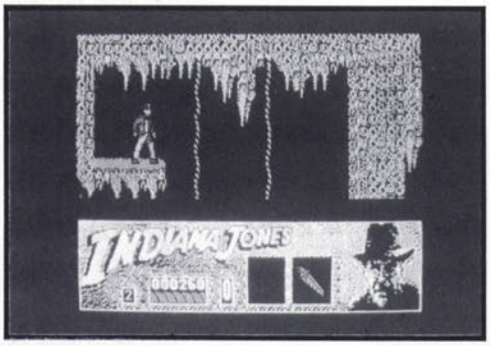
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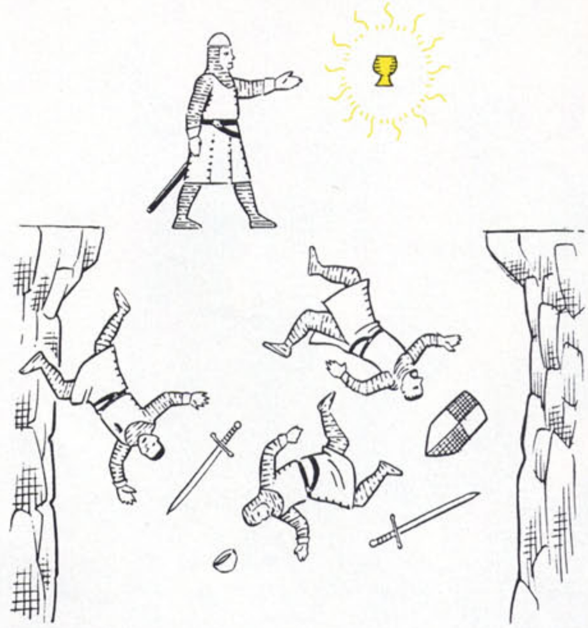
(Continued from page 16)

INDIANA JONES and the LAST CRUSADE



from one precarious place to another. Instead of becoming a game that features an Indiana Jones which fans can readily identify with, the game becomes just another search and recover game in which the character icon happens to resemble a familiar film hero.

It would have been nice if the designers had brought some of Indy's *personal* characteristics to the game instead of settling for a "cardboard" caricature. **CGW**





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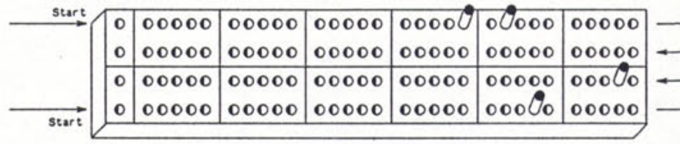
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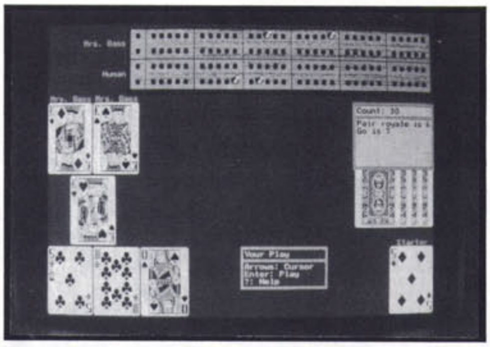
Available for Apple II Family, Apple IIGS, Tandy and IBM-PC and Compatibles.

(Continued from page 32)

Cribbage King
Gin King



velous capacity to surprise. Tournament mode can be turned on for printed scores and history of past scores broken down in various statistical forms.



Some Restrictions Do Apply

That said, I have only one complaint. The pegboard display does not completely satisfy. You cannot easily determine what the scores are from deal to deal because the it is not numbered and, because of graphics limitations, the display is only half the size of a regulation cribbage board. There is certainly room on the screen for a corresponding digital read out of scores.

Factory Incentive

Also included in the package is *Gin King*. Everything said about *Cribbage King* goes equally for this well-designed and easy-to-play gin rummy game. Customizable games and excellent on-line help make playing and learning to play as fun as it is quick.

Two types of Gin can be programmed: regular and Oklahoma. The latter's first upcard determines the maximum deadwood allowed when "knocking" (or putting your cards down without actually having gin).

Cribbage King is well worth its price. To have *Gin King* also included makes it a decided computer game bargain for any card shark.

CGW


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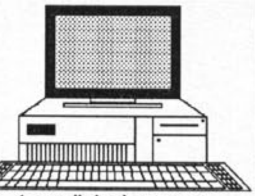
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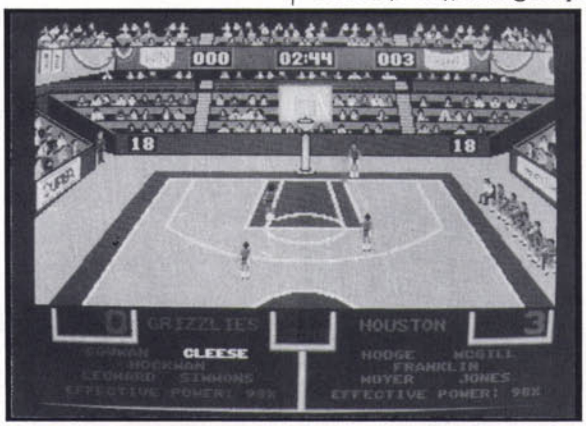
(Continued from page 28)

Smooth As Silk

crucial moment. Some of the options which "coaches" may consider are: trying to effect a steal, crashing the boards, protecting or setting up the fast break, working inside or outside, working the clock, making a quick shot, and fouling the opponent. If the player desires, however, the "auto" option allows the computer to make all of the coaching decisions so the gamer may concentrate on the play action. Pure action gamers will find this a valuable option. Others may want to control the play action while having a friend set the strategies as the coach.

Cheap Seats (The Basic Game)

In the "End-View" Module, which comes standard with the game, the gamer does not actually control his/her team members. Instead, with the use of "Flow-Control", he/she "yells" at them. Whether it be controlled by human or computer, the "coach" helps players move the ball, set picks, develop plays and handle defense. "Flow-Control" allows the gamer to make brief split-second decisions that can make the difference between victory or defeat. It allows the gamer to react by passing and shooting the ball, as well as attempting to block shots.



As the game loads, players see a glimpse of the opposing head coach and his team. One then has the option of viewing the Nick & Bob Pregame Show, which contains information which may lead to your team's success. If you select the Pregame Show, the screen blanks out and you see a view of the entire court with Nick & Bob in the foreground. As they begin to talk about the two opposing team's strengths and weaknesses, you will notice an odd sense of humor in these two men. They exchange insults back and forth and still manage to stay on the topic of the day's game. Their information is valuable and one is advised to watch their show prior to every game. They will identify the opposing team's star player, the best shooter, the best rebounder, and any other pertinent data. It has plenty of television-style color, as well. (The halftime show is less important.)

As in most leagues, this game provides a definite home court advantage. This advantage should not be confused with the players' "Hot Value". This factor measures the capability of a player to shoot the ball at maximum potential (i.e. Are they on a "Hot Streak"?). This component is also measured and recorded by the game.

Stats, Stats, and More Stats (League Play)

In setting up the "SBA" League, the gamer can select the number of human-owned teams (1 or 2). You may also select which division you will play in, as well as the minutes per quarter, the number of games per season, and the length of the playoffs.

In the "College" League the player will be able to recreate the NCAA tournament to determine the National Champion. The player has a choice of 64 teams that qualified for the 1989 NCAA tournament. There are four regions made up of 16 teams in each region. The teams are ranked. All teams have their actual starting five line-ups with their real stats from the 1989 regular season. The other seven players on each team do not have real names (they are referred to as forward 1, guard 2, etc.) and are ranked randomly.

When the "College" League Module is loaded the player will see a split screen with the close-up of the tournament tree on the left and a miniature version of the entire tree on the right. The close-up will show the gamer their selected team, as well as their next opponent. The player can choose if they wish to view their team's or any other team's regular season's stats. As in real College Basketball, the three-point line is shorter than that of the "SBA". Injuries are for one game only, as opposed to the "SBA" where injuries can last up to 10 games. If the player advances to the next round, the gamer's team records are saved and the tree displays your next opponent.

In both the "SBA" and "College" League Modules, statistics for each team are displayed at the end of each game (number of minutes played (MN), shots/field goals attempted (FGA), shots made (FGM), field goal percentage (FG%), free-throw attempts (FTA) and made (FTM), percentage scored (FT%), total points (PT), rebounds (RB), personal fouls (F), steals (ST) and blocks (BL). These stats are recorded and compiled into the team history statistics (Note: The "College League" Module does not have this team history option.). In the "SBA", team averages for the human-owned teams can be accessed.

With the "Side-View" Module, the end-of-game statistics are enhanced giving the player "quarterly-points-scored" as well as arranging the players in top scoring order. Individual and team records can also be displayed at will.

As stated previously, in the "Side-View" Module, the gamer controls the center. In the Amiga version, opposing centers are denoted by their white jerseys. The way the gamer may identify his center from that of his opponents is by the different colored stripe on the socks of both centers. The stripe matches the color of rest of the team's jerseys. Knowing the programming enigmas associated with the differentiation of the centers, this reviewer still felt that it was very difficult to distinguish one center from the other while playing the Amiga version. (In the C-64 version, the centers have different colored shirts.)

At half-time, the gamer is treated to a "dazzling display" by the SportTime Cheerleaders if he/she so chooses. This bevy of beauties will perform their fast-paced exploits to a pulsating beat down on the arena floor. While a welcome diversion from the Nick & Bob show, players need only watch this display once. A cancel option is provided.

You can only make the playoffs if you finish either first or second in your division. If you finished first, you will play the second place team in your division and vice-versa. If a player has been injured previous to a playoff game, he is not eligible to play until he is healed. If you happen to win your first playoff game, a humorous commercial will be shown. As previously stated, the length of the playoff series may be set at the beginning of the game when creating the new league. The gamer can choose a best of one, three or five game series.

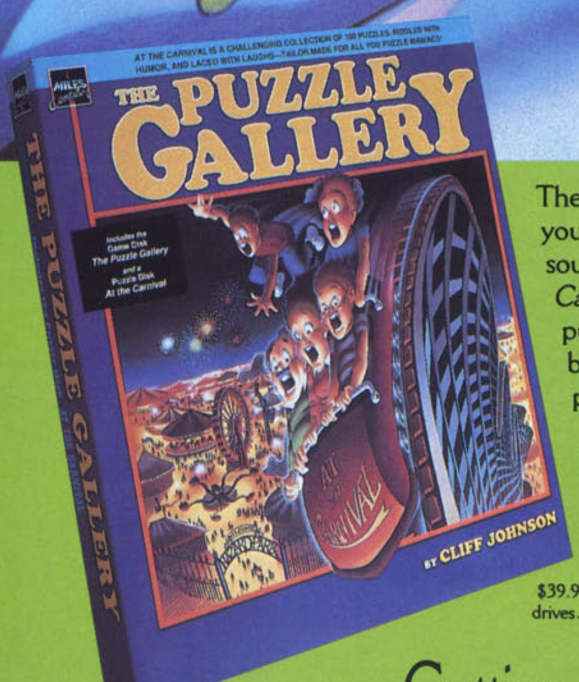
Post Game Report

Omni-Play Basketball has a minimum requirement of 512k on the Amiga. It is hard disk installable and not "software" copy protected (although you are asked for keyword identification from the manual). Be sure to read the manual. A completely different level of the game will be discovered. The game comes standard

(Continued on page 64)

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MILES Computing

(Continued from page 62)

Smooth As Silk

with the "End-View" and "SBA" Game Modules. Presently available for additional purchase are the "Side-View" and "College League" Modules (The retail price is $19.95 for both the Amiga & C-64) The "Pro League" Module is due out in January of 1990 while the "Fantasy League" and "Print" Modules are due by June 1990. (Note: These additional modules are only available directly from SportTime - they may be reached Monday - Friday 1PM to 4PM PST at 1-800-PLAY GAMES.)

SportTime's expandability feature will also include updates to existing modules. For instance, if gamers want to see XYZ features incorporated into the game this will be possible through future releases and updates. This reviewer has been told that SportTime will try to keep communication with its fans through a newsletter called "Video League News" that will start circulation at the beginning of 1990.

This reviewer felt that in early seasons in an "End-View" Module game, players seemed to commit an inordinate amount of fouls. As players grew in experience and their "control" (C) skill rating grew, this issue seemed to correct itself. This problem was not evident in the "Side-View" Module due to the differences in the style of game play. Upon first inspection, the "Side-View" Module seemed to have more "arcade type" features. This is because of the difference in the play interface, i.e. gamers now have full control over a player. Not just to pass and shoot but also to box out opposing players, set picks, and call for the ball. Upon closer examination, however, there is an implied "strategy factor" for the gamer due to the fact that the rest of the team continues to play while you setup your center for different game plans. Scores in this game module are lower because the gamer will find that he/she is controlling the ball more than in the "End-View" Module.

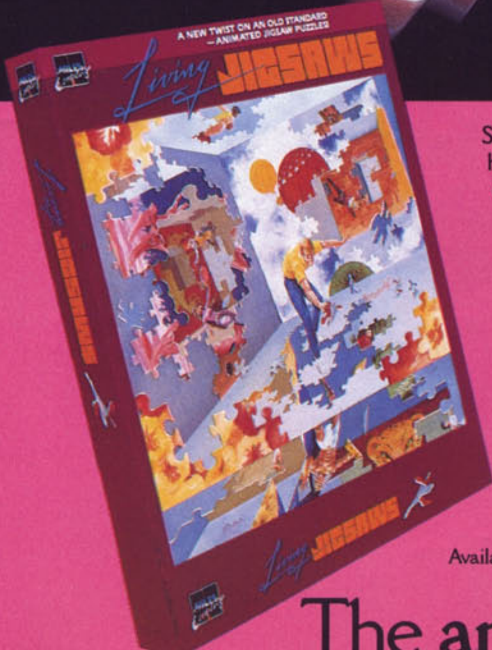
The special effects incorporated into the program are superlative in every way. Some of the effects available with expanded memory include: the swish of the net or the clank of the rim and backboard as a basket is scored, the rolling noise as the ball circles on the rim, cheers from the crowd for the home team and boos for the visitor when baskets are made and/or fouls are committed. The game also allows for the referee and his whistle, fouls and ejections, technical fouls when a player breaks the backboard, free-throw shooting, overtime, shot clock variation for different quarter lengths, the end of quarter buzzer, individual game and season stats for your team, game forfeits and lost trading points.

For this reviewer, the level of painstaking detail put into the final product make this game worth purchasing alone. For instance, when Nick & Bob are carrying on with their Pregame Show, the arena organ can be heard riling the crowd in the background. It's so real that gamers can hear the surge of the crowd as the excitement builds in a game. The programmers have even provided for extra levels of cheers that can be heard when your player is fouled (in the home court) in a shooting situation and the shot is good!

The manual was found to be extremely thorough. The game play as well as the real-life aspects of the game seem to be covered completely. Overall, this game is a must for the sports simulation and statistical buff as well as the multi-player game fan. The game also takes into account whether the player is a "joystick jockey" or not and allows a set-up where strategy is the main concern. Considering the expandability factor and the flexibility in game play, **SportTime**'s *Omni-Play™ Basketball* is tops! **CGW**

MOVING PICTURES





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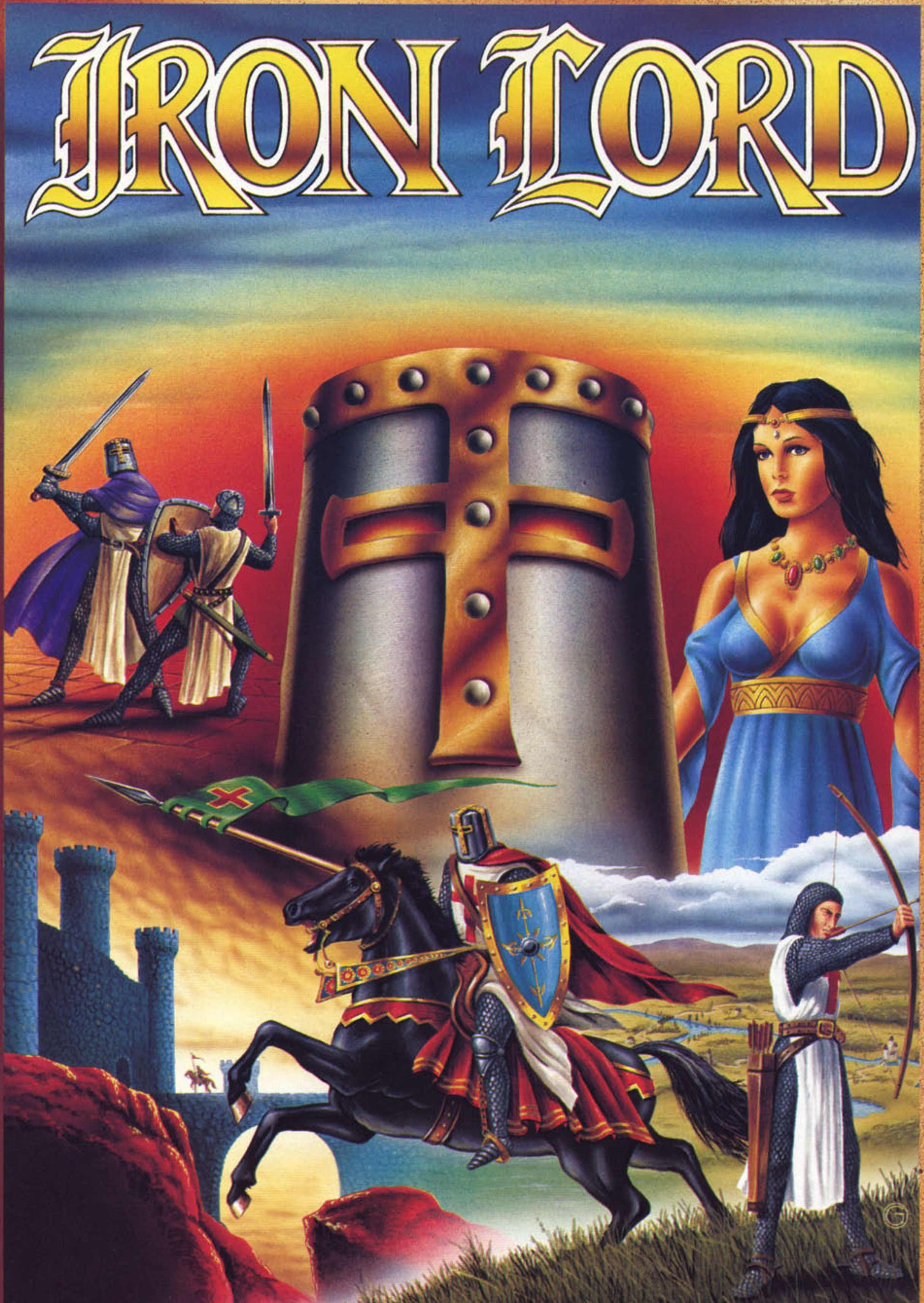




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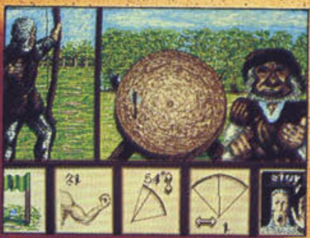




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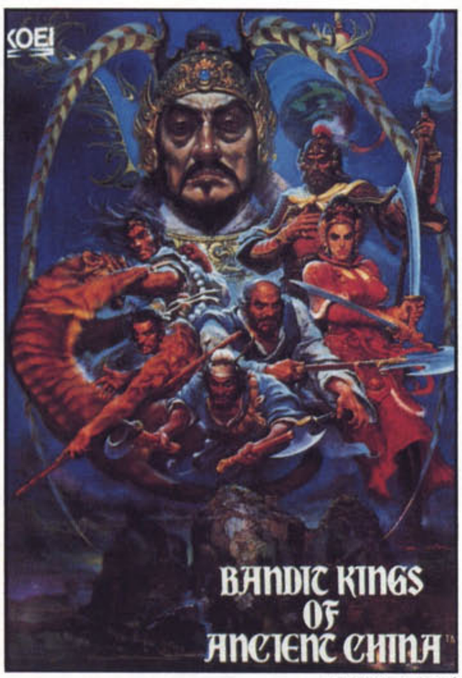
Circle Reader Service #50

Guerillas In The Myth

Koei Reveals The "Bandit Kings of Ancient China"

by Johnny L. Wilson

And lo, Myth begat Legend and when the Legend had fully conceived, it brought forth History. The ancient Chinese myth spoke of 108 demon spirits set free on Lian Shan Bo mountain. The legends told of ostracized heroes who lived on the fringes of society until they could gain the strength to right the wrongs they had incurred and restore the glory of the Song Dynasty. In the modern era, the legendary deeds of these ancient outlaws were sketched so broadly on the canvas of story that they inspired Mao Tse Tung to hold his band of revolutionary guerillas together until they could impact the world with their communist coup.



TITLE:	Bandit Kings of Ancient China
SYSTEM:	IBM
# PLAYERS:	1-5
PRICE:	$59.95
PUBLISHER:	Koei Corporation Burlingame, CA

Something Familiar

At first glance, *Bandit Kings of Ancient China* (*Bandit Kings*) appears to offer the same interface and same strategic challenge as earlier **Koei** releases (*Romance of the Three Kingdoms, Nobunaga's Ambition,* and *Genghis Khan*). The game covers a period of history with which most occidentals are not familiar. In this case, 12th Century China. Also, the graphics are just as colorful as those in its predecessors, even if they are more finely detailed. In addition, the game is still primarily menu-driven and offers a marvelously detailed manual with the highest production values **Koei** has yet put into a manual. Players must still unite provinces (in this case, prefectures), build a strong economic and military base, and handle diplomacy. In fact, players even end up reuniting the Song Dynasty in much the same way China is united in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and Japan is centralized in *Nobunaga's Ambition*. Finally, as in *Genghis Khan*, nearly every activity has its cost in attribute points.



For those who have never played a **Koei** game, these strategy games offer seasonal turns in which the player controls a primary leader and must select the options which indicate what the prioritized activity for each controlled area/province/prefecture shall be during a given season. Diplomatic negotiation, war, economic build-up, military escalation or determining internal politics may be necessary activities in any given turn. In *Bandit Kings*, each turn is equal to a month of game time.

Something Peculiar

Yet, for every facet of the game which seems familiar, there seems something new. For example, even though the game touches base with actual history, the story line of *Bandit Kings* is so intertwined with myth and legend that magic becomes a vital factor. One may be able to peer backwards through the mists of time and demythologize the fireballs into flaming arrows and scorched earth attacks which assumed supernatural power in the minds of ancient peasants, but "magic" must be reckoned with in order to succeed in *Bandit Kings*. Also, where the earlier games basically offered short versions and long versions of the same game, *Bandit Kings* offers four scenarios with the same basic goal, but distinctive constraints.

The graphics in *Bandit Kings* have been enhanced beyond **Koei**'s earlier designs by the addition of more than one screen to indicate defeat and development of a beautiful victory/reward sequence. In *Genghis Khan*, for example, the game indicated that the player was defeated by portraying a screen of the player character's death (penetrated by a score or more of arrows in the world conquest scenario and facing public execution in the Temujin scenario). In *Bandit Kings*, the screens which tell the tale for a defeated player depict: a jail cell door closing upon the forlorn figure of a disgraced player character; an animated sequence where the conquered player character is convincingly beheaded; and the burning and looting barbarian hordes during the invasion of A.D. 1127. The victory sequence provides the player with the catharsis of having satisfying confrontations with both Gao Qui and the emperor.

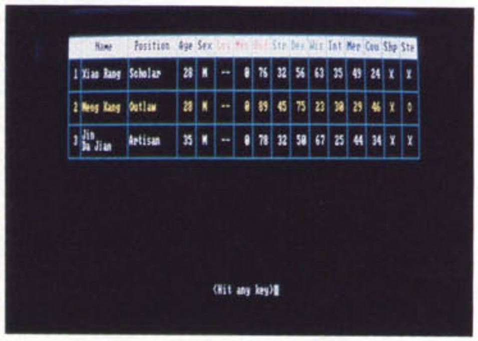
In addition to managing the economic and military affairs of the player's controlled prefectures, management of human resources is more important than in the earlier **Koei** games. Each hero (commander), including the player's character himself, can only command a maximum of 100 soldiers. Thus, it is exceedingly important to recruit and retain subordinate commanders. If the player doesn't keep the loyalty levels of these subordinate commanders high enough, they will often defect and take their soldiers with them. Timing is essential. It is not a good idea to recruit a "hero" to serve with the player's character *unless* the player has enough gold to immediately purchase the subordinate's loyalty.

When the player's primary character builds up sufficient popularity, recruiting not only becomes a relatively simple task, but non-player characters occasionally appear from all over the country, begging to be recruited. Until this plateau is reached, however, recruiting is a "touch and go" matter. The player's primary hero must venture into town; examine the roll of prospective heroes; and either divine the prospective hero's thoughts (by paying a soothsayer) or attempting to recruit. Utilizing the soothsayer saves time, keystrokes, and popularity (i.e. "face"). If the player tries to recruit a hero who is not kindly disposed toward his primary character, the character will lose "face", be chided to expand, and become more popular.

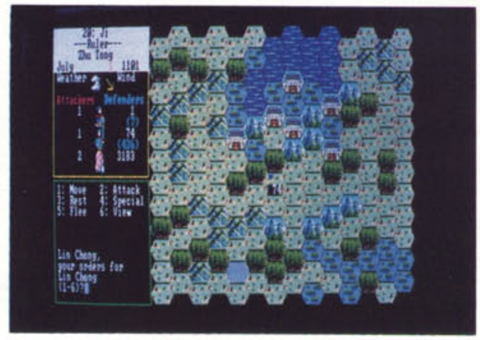
To further complicate the player's efforts, Gao Qui's



Strategic Map



Listing of Potential Recruits



Tactical Combat Screen

magistrates wait around like vultures to pluck a percentage of any accumulated funds whenever the player's character or subordinates seem to be getting ahead. Much of the time, the operative principle is going to be "Use it or lose it!" Note that whenever support in a given prefecture goes over the 60 mark, the tribute demands become more and more frequent.

Finally, where unification of a country or empire is the final goal of *Bandit Kings*' predecessors, unification takes something of a back seat to avenging wrong, vindicating personal honor, and bringing one particular foul miscreant to justice. Said foul miscreant is Gao Qui. Once a fine athlete who earned the emperor's attention on the playing field, the Gao Qui present in the game is a lethargic and obese (with bulbous distended stomach which rivals a water buffalo's) coward who spends his days and nights jeering at his rivals, plundering those who work diligently and seizing power with a megalomania that rivals his appetite for food. Any time the player experiences a minor misfortune, an on-screen caricature of Gao Qui laughs at the player's expense. Although the designers did not actually animate his fat sweaty jowels and rolling flab, the caricature still seems to take on a malevolent gleam as the game progresses.

Before the satisfaction of trouncing this diabolical villain can be achieved, however, the player character must reach a plateau which did not have to be accomplished in the earlier games. The player's primary character (called a "Good Fellow" in the game) must reach a popularity of level of 250 before the emperor will *allow* him to bring the fat, sleazy coward to justice. Also, unlike the previous games where the player's characters could keep on playing until they were killed or died of old age, the character has to accomplish his task before A.D. 1127 when the northern barbarians invade the empire.

Something Outrageous

Bandit Kings offers more than any previous **Koei** product. One cannot help but be amazed at the solid research, brilliant system, and fabulous game play which all of these games offer. Nevertheless, even the best of games can be improved and the **Koei** interface in particular is no exception. There must be a thousand extra keystrokes per game session which could be reduced with a mouse interface. Mouse support is becoming more and more standard in the MS-DOS environment and charging through menu after menu in these games makes the player understand why that support is so popular.



Second, although the present reviewer appreciates the fact that the combat screens feature zones of control (*Romance* and *Nobunaga* did not), the computer opponents in *Bandit Kings* are not nearly as competitive as those in the earlier games. In *Bandit Kings*, it is the rare unit under the computer's command that acts aggressively. Most of the time, the computer's forces sit in the castles and wait to be obliterated. In all fairness to the AI, however, the combat maps contain more hexes than ever before and there are more options in the combat menus. Therefore, the plethora of additional considerations creates more complex combat algorithms which, in turn, probably has a tendency to induce a more conservative computer opponent. This fact may present something of a sameness to the tactical combat, but it certainly assures that the opponents will use the terrain to full defensive advantage (something the opponents in the earlier games did not accomplish often enough).



There was one minor feature which this reviewer found annoying. There is a major mechanism in the game where Gao Qui's minions demand tribute. The player has the option of acquiescing to or refusing the demand. If, of course, the player refuses a villain who happens to have a larger/stronger force than the player has in a given prefecture, the villain will invariably attack. If the player builds up his forces sufficiently, the bad guys will eventually give up. Unfortunately, no matter how strong the player's forces are, there is an annoyance feature, apart from the major mechanism, where Gao Qui sneaks in and *forces* the player's characters to pay tribute. The player has absolutely no recourse in *this* circumstance and Gao Qui takes no risk whatsoever in plundering the player's funds. The designer insists that this is an annoyance factor designed to motivate the player to go after Gao Qui with that much more enthusiasm when he can. "Paying tribute" is the wrong term. One has a *choice* whether to pay tribute or not (and often pays the consequences if one refuses). Actually, Gao Qui is *raiding* the player's treasury behind the player's back. The on-screen message which the player receives should suggest this more sinister activity where Gao Qui is acting in cowardice rather than implying that Gao Qui is acting from a position of strength. The motivation would be more clear and the atmosphere would seem more authentic if this message would change. Whatever the motivation, though, trouncing Gao Qui and his minions is truly a satisfying accomplishment with an expanded personal



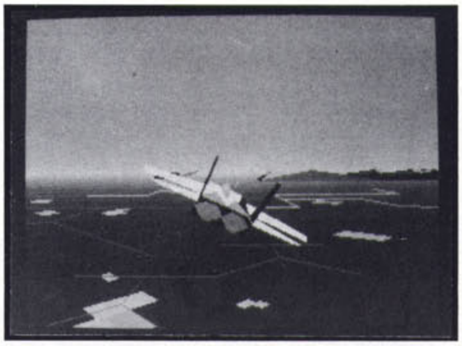
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F-15 Strike Eagle II

Difficulty levels range from rookie-pilot-veteran-ace, but flight characteristics remain the same throughout the simulation. Higher levels of difficulty simply cause more and better enemy planes and air defenses and a more rapid accumulation of damage.

Flight and combat operations are easy to learn. Weapons systems are fixed, and may be selected by key-press ("G" for ground, "M" for mid-range air-to-air, and "S" for close-in air-to-air missile). Enemy missile systems are of two (2) types: radar-guided and infra-red homing. Chaff is an effective countermeasure against the former, while flares may be utilized against IR-homing threats. Based on this reviewer's experience, chaff is more efficient and, in most cases, will avert the



threat. However, newer missile and homing systems require active avoidance in addition to flares. In any case, if one changes course to meet the missile at a perpendicular, it will normally lose target acquisition. The problem with this is that in a high threat environment, one will be all over the sky and lose sight of the mission.

Targeting the enemy is a simple matter. For example, if the ground missile is selected, one may toggle between visible ground targets. The air option is similar, except that the toggle is unavailable. If an air threat is shown, one cannot switch, even though another aircraft may be a more immediate threat. When initial target acquisition is achieved, the targeting square turns oval. When it changes color, hit probability is very high. If a hit is made on a primary or secondary target, the computer will offer congratulations (e.g. "great hit!"). This reviewer would have liked to see a tone and lock-on beep (a la "Top Gun") in the targeting procedure.

Navigation is simplified by having the "waypoint control" (no relation to Mr. Peabody's "wayback machine") already locked in with primary target, secondary target and friendly airfield. The initial Strike Eagle allowed one to set the waypoint control manually and this reviewer missed that option, but the current settings are easy to use and assist in mission accomplishment.

In rookie levels, one begins in the air. At other levels, one can take-off and land from airfields/carriers. In order to land, one must "target" the airfield. This option was used in lieu of an ILS approach in order to save memory. If one is a member of the CIA school of flying (i.e. "Clod in the Air"), an auto-pilot option will land the plane by itself. Careful attention to this mechanism can be an excellent learning tool in learning how to land. MicroProse is to be particularly commended for this option!

Historically, *F-15 II* is more of a game than a simulation; but it openly admits this. Thus, while the F-15 is not used in carrier operations, most gamers "want" the option and so, it is available. Similarly, even though the F-15 is a two-seater with both a pilot and weapons officer, the game chooses to ignore the two-seater aspect. Finally, while most enemy planes are destroyed with one missile hit, the F-15 can absorb 10-20 hits (depending on difficulty level) before being rendered useless and the F-15 *never* suffers from mid-air explosion. At worst, one will have sufficient time to eject unless he flies directly into the ground.

Conclusions

F-15 II is a gamer's game. Realism has been deliberately minimized in order to yield an entertaining product. There are few combat simulators that my ten year old son enjoys, but both he and I had a lot of fun with *F-15 II*. The only hesitation this reviewer has is concerning the large number of combat simulators currently available. For the dedicated aerophile, this may be too simplistic. For the neophyte, the large number of simulators available offers a confusing choice. But overall, *F-15 Strike Eagle II* is a solid package of entertainment.

CGW



HARPOON

Somewhere in the desolate and freezing wastes of the North Atlantic, between Iceland and the Kola Peninsula, a Soviet battle fleet is lurking, ready to pounce on its prey.

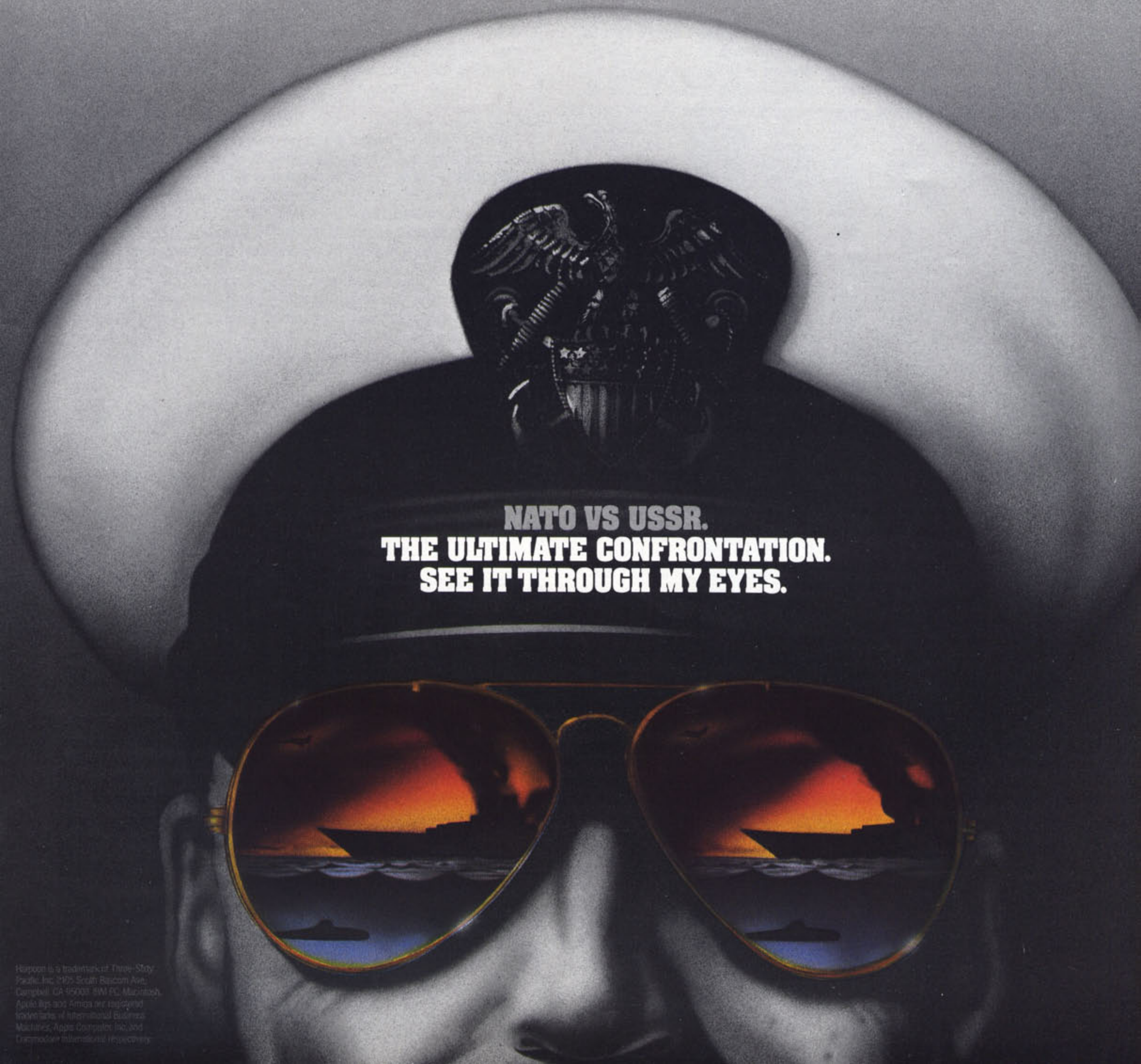
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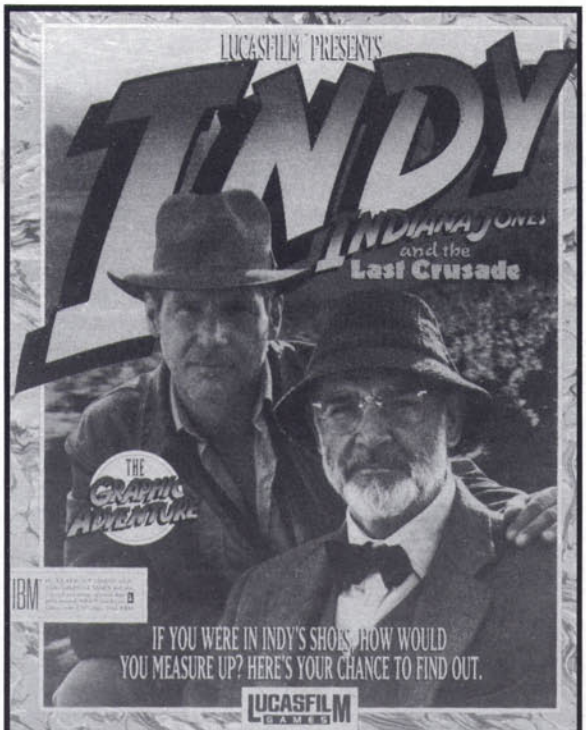


TRAVELS WITH INDY

"Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade: The Graphic Adventure"

by Charles Ardai

About a third of the way through *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade: The Graphic Adventure* (*Indy: Adventure*), the player finds himself in an underground cavern, on a narrow stone bridge. There's a wooden panel in the roof of the cavern and he finds his on-screen persona, Indy himself, carrying a long-dead pirate's skeletal arm—complete with hook. The wooden panel is dripping water onto the bridge something fierce. In a moment of inspiration, Indy walks under the panel and, standing on tiptoe, teetering precariously, manages to jam the arm (hook-downwards) between two leaky planks. Then, our hero steps back, uncoils his whip, leans and casts. The leather arcs out before him, snagging the hook to the accompaniment of a brief John Williams fanfare. With a mighty tug, he pulls the wooden plug free and a column of water gushes down, obliterating the bridge!



TITLE:	Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade: The Graphic Adventure
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$49.95
DESIGNERS:	Noah Falstein, Ron Gilbert, and David Fox
PUBLISHER:	Lucasfilm Games San Rafael, CA

Indiana Jones, of course, takes it in stride: all in a day's adventuring. The player, however, sits there slack-jawed and prays that he has saved the game recently. Then, he tallies up all the people he absolutely *has* to show this to. This is no mere computer game. This is *cinema*!.

Indy Beginning . . .

Remember in the beginning of "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade," when Indy finally recovers the Cross of Coronado, thirty years after losing it to a gang of pothunters? He hands the treasure over to Marcus Brody and tells Marcus how long he's been looking for it: "All my life." I sympathize. That's how I feel about a *good* Indiana Jones computer game. I've been looking for one for a *long* time.

There have been many attempts to bring Indy home, starting with Atari's VCS version of "Raiders of the Lost Ark." Some of these were good tries (**Mindscape**'s entertaining *Temple of Doom* arcade game adaptation, for instance) and some were not so good (such as **Mindscape**'s execrable *Indiana Jones and the Lost Kingdom*), but until now none had the same magic as the movies.

For *Indy: Graphic*, **Lucasfilm** decided to design the game themselves. Obviously, that's what it took. As both the movie and the game demonstrate, **Lucasfilm** still knows, and knows better than anyone else, how to do Indy right.

A Passage to Indiana

When George Lucas and Steven Spielberg sat down to plot out the third Indiana Jones adventure, people from the **Lucasfilm** game division sat down with them. The game designers were there from the start and, when either man came up with an idea, even if it didn't end up in the movie, it tended to go into the game. The result is a game "designed", in a sense, by Lucas and Spielberg themselves.

Of course, the actual game designers and programmers deserve all the credit for bringing the game to life with astounding graphics and animation, a strong control system (essentially the same as was used for *Maniac Mansion* and *Zak Mckraken*), and quite a few original puzzles. Nevertheless, Lucas and Spielberg were at the heart of this game and it shows.

Some of the puzzles in the game are *better* than the ones viewers saw on-screen. Everyone loves the scene in the movie, for instance, in which Sean Connery accidentally sets fire to the Nazi stronghold while trying to untie himself from Harrison Ford. In the game, though, the solution to that scene is not just funny, it's ingenious and it has nothing to do with fire.

Similarly, in case the movie's ending didn't satisfy you, the game has several completely different endings. Some of these are as satisfying in their finality as the famous warehouse scene in "Raiders". Even though it means replaying the entire endgame (you cannot save the game inside the Temple of the Holy Grail), you'll want to try out all the possibilities just to see what happens. What if Indy takes the Grail himself? What if he gives it back to the knight? What if he hands it to Elsa? The player becomes writer-director.

Throw in intensive support for the **Ad Lib** sound board and for advanced graphics cards, six disks worth of locations, breathtaking animated sequences, a variety of inventive perspectives and "camera angles," and a fine balance between exploration, puzzle-solving and action sequences, and this game comes remarkably close to being a better Indiana Jones movie than "The Last Crusade" was.

Indy Morning, Indy Evening, Ain't We Got Fun

Almost everything from the movie is in the game. From the

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Now Shooting On Location.

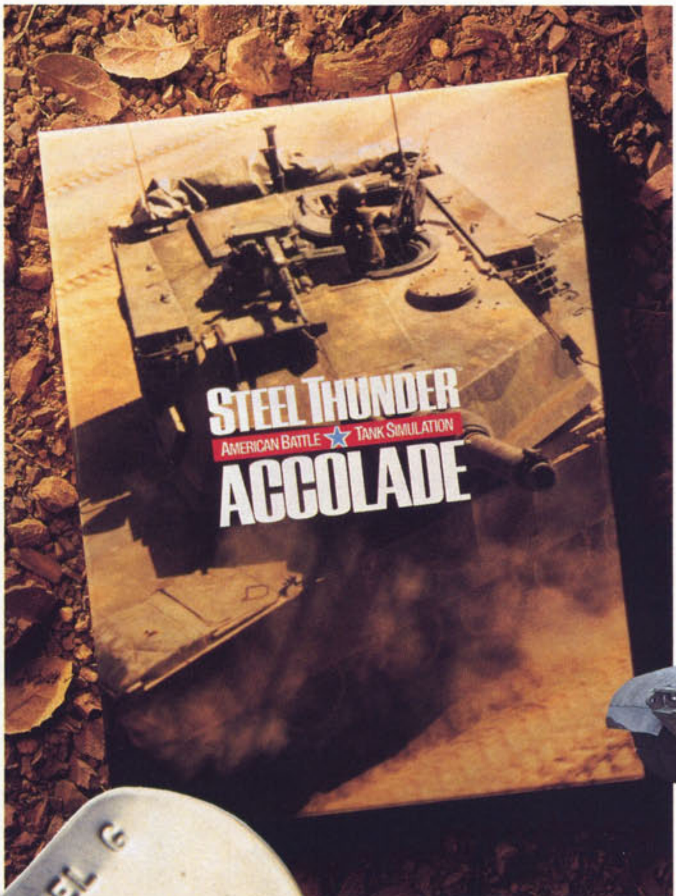


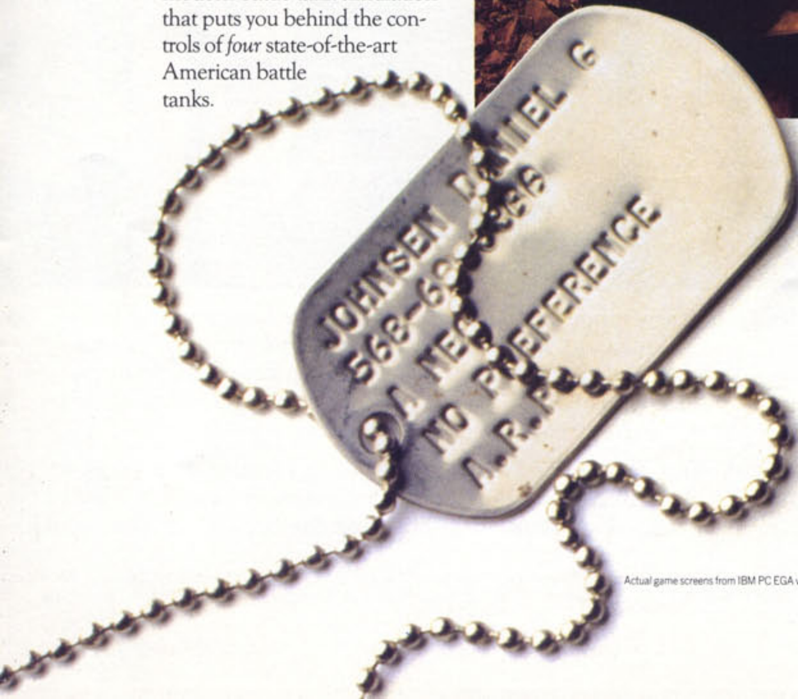
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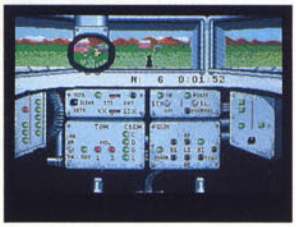


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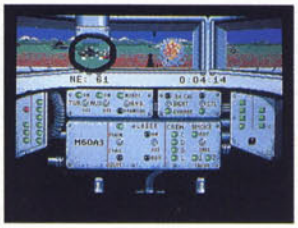




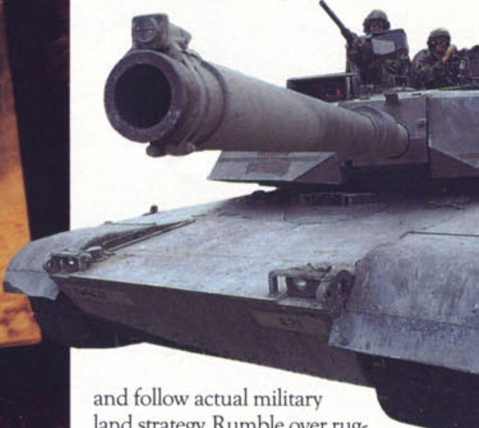


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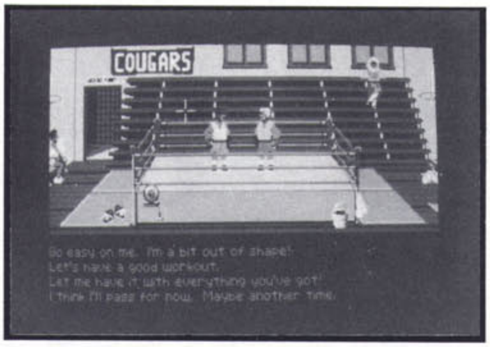
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Actual game screens from IBM PC EGA version of the game. Other versions may vary.

(Continued from page 72)

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade



circus-train chase (here used as a backdrop for the credits) to the deathtraps in the Grail Temple, only one major sequence—the tank battle—has been omitted.

Just as in the movie, Indy's goals are to rescue his kidnapped father and beat the Nazis and Walter Donovan to the resting place of the Holy Grail. Each sequence is at once both familiar and novel, and both facets work to the game's advantage. One finds oneself cheering when there is something something remembered from the film on the screen and one finds oneself cheering doubly loud when something new appears.

The two substantial areas in the game are the catacombs under Venice and the Nazi Schloss Brunwald in Austria. The former is far and away the best maze sequence ever put into an adventure game, accomplishing something I had thought impossible: it makes exploring a maze simple enough to accomplish in a single attempt and enjoyable enough that one can go back again just for the fun of it. The latter is reminiscent of *Castle Wolfenstein* (if one is old enough to remember *Castle Wolfenstein*!) with its overhead perspective, its beer steins and treasure chests, and its dumber-than-Col. Klink guards.

These are connected by smaller scenes in which there is less to do: Indy's college, Dad's house, the library, Berlin, the blimp, and so forth. Although the progression is strictly linear, you are allowed a fair degree of latitude within each sequence. Many puzzles have more than one solution and, as you will discover, it is virtually impossible to get caught in a dead end. One can lose, of course—try choosing "Throw a punch" when facing Hitler—but one would have a hard time accidentally placing oneself in a no-win situation. This is appreciated, since it frees players from pointless anxiety and allows them simply to *enjoy*.

Indy Interest of Fairness

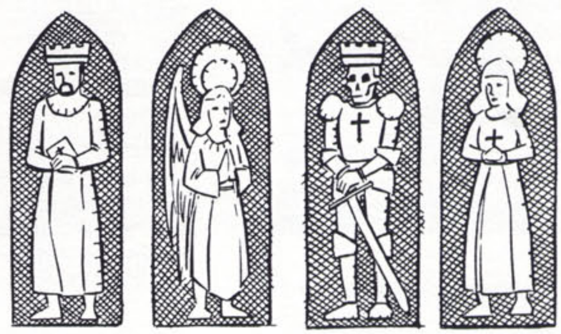
In fairness, it should be noted that what players may be enjoying may be a little simpler than it seems when one is playing the game. Ultimately, the game is just two play environments and a peppering of one-shot puzzles, nestled in a mound of eye-candy.

This is not a very potent criticism, though. Not every game has to be meat and potatoes. Candy is a pleasant change of pace, especially when it's served up as deliciously as it is here. The criticism becomes more potent only in those rare instances when the service isn't up to par: when you finally release Dad the payoff is lackluster (unlike the incredible graphic when you finally reach Sir Richard's tomb); and the final approach to the Temple drags on as you go through checkpoint after checkpoint. Fortunately, these are very much the exceptions and not the rule.

Yes, it is true that the *game* doesn't really start until Indy gets to Venice. Yes, while it is fun to watch familiar scenes lifted straight from the movie, it can become tedious, as well (After all, if that's what you want, there's always the videotape.). Somehow, however, none of this detracts significantly from the entertainment the game delivers.

It is impossible to overstate the impact of the lovingly detailed and abundant animation. On top of that, the game offers: stunning background images, John Williams' theme music, and several nice little puzzles. Even the hardcopy "Grail Diary" which comes with the game is better written than you'd have any reason to expect it to be. It captures the elder Jones' lifetime of Grail-hunting with intelligence, sensitivity, and wit.

In short, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade: The Graphic Adventure* offers more than any comparable game does in the way of sheer wide-eyed pleasure. Just about any gamer will find it enormously appealing. If one should also happen to be an Indiana Jones fan to boot, it will be a special treasure.



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Combots



Gold of the Americas



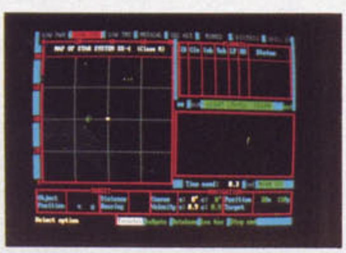
Ishido



Nuclear War



Sim City



Star Fleet II

in creating challenging solitaire strategy games. The designers also enjoy the study of oriental culture in general, hence the inclusion of an oracle based on the *I Ching* which the player can consult whenever certain four-way matches are achieved. *Ishido* offers a solitaire mode, a cooperative routine where players work with the computer, and a tournament option with timed moves where each player has an identical stone "deck". *Ishido* is a fascinating gift selection which is both challenging and aesthetically pleasing. The Mac II color graphics are even more impressive than the IBM screen pictured here. Amiga , Macintosh and Mac II ($49.95), Apple IIGS and IBM ($39.95).

Nuclear War (*New World* Computing): For the first time, *Nuclear War* allowed the New World designers the opportunity to develop a game utilizing the Amiga's graphic and sound capabilities. As leader of a nuclear power in a fictional world, players in *Nuclear War* participate in a unique and humorous game. Diplomacy, propaganda, and strategy combine in a game where off-the-wall incidents like space alien invasions, "Cattletech" weaponry, and others can tip the balance between the human players and their comical computer counterparts (Ronnie Rayguns, Tricky Dickie, and others). *Nuclear War* is the only 20 megaton present you can purchase which won't bomb this Christmas. Amiga, IBM ($49.95).

Sim City (**Maxis**): Stanislaw Lem's science fiction story about an exiled tyrant who played a planetary government simulation which came to "life" formed the inspiration for *Sim City*. Designer Will Wright had finished the game almost two years before it was actually published because it was so unique that potential publishers did not immediately see the game play value. With a combination "design your own city" editor and added scenarios, the game play became more obvious. *Sim City* is a true multi-tasking environment that allows the player to become a hybrid city planner, board of supervisors, and mayor/city council as he plays with the "editor" interface and a sophisticated simulation constantly working behind the "editor" in order to report fresh statistics and events to the player at regular intervals. Santa's elves had just started to ship the IBM version at press time. As CGW's **Game of the Year 1989**, *Sim City* is an award-winning Christmas gift. Amiga, C-64, IBM, and Macintosh ($49.95).

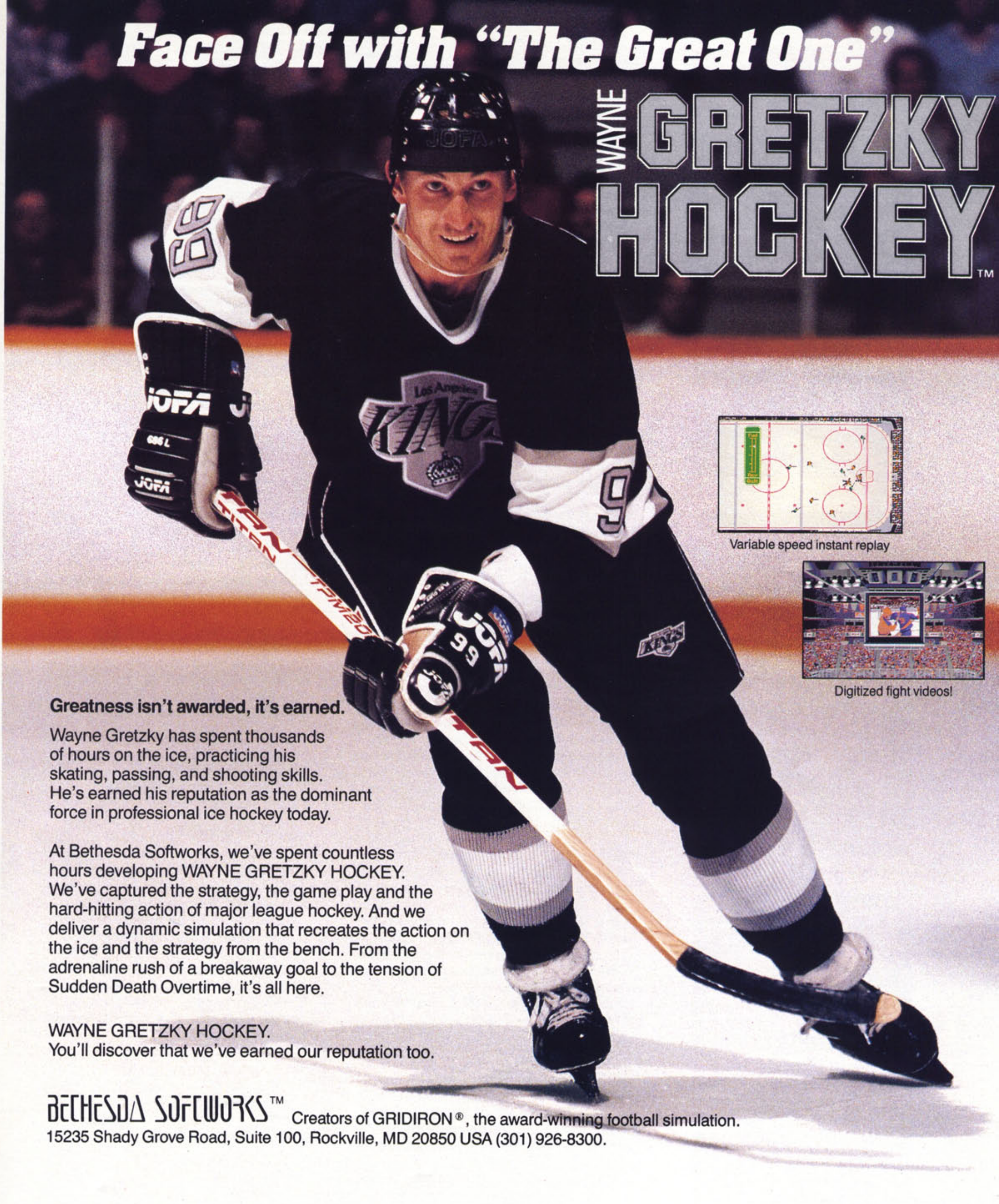
Star Fleet II (*Interstel*): With the success of *Star Fleet I*, with game play based heavily on the classic mainframe *Star Trek* adventure, Dr. Trevor Sorenson wanted to expand the framework of the game to include ship-to-ship boarding sequences, planetary invasions, and significantly more detail. In the long-awaited *Star Fleet II*, Sorenson and *Empire* designer Mark Baldwin have incorporated these dream features into a complex and challenging gaming experience. Add to this the player's ability to "command" a villainous Krellan vessel with absolutely no guilty feelings about wasting galaxies and torturing prisoners in this "simulation of a simulation" and one has a unique kind of strategy/wargame. Advance looks have revealed some rough edges in the game, but the depth of the product forces any strategy gamer's "Santa Claus" to seriously consider it. IBM ($59.95).

Action

FaceOff (*Gamestar*): Until the release of *FaceOff!*, there had not yet been a hockey game designed specifically for the IBM environment. So, Mike Benna, Wayne Townsend, and Mike Suarez decided to change that. Their game features a hands-on fight mode, large sized animated skaters, and the Shot Cam, an on-the-ice/one-on-one perspective of the player against the goalie. For casual hockey fans, the audio-visual heat of *FaceOff!* should cause the wrapping paper to melt off the package. For the statistics-oriented fan, this gift idea should enable them to enjoy the challenge of coaching their team through the Gamestar Hockey League season. IBM ($29.95).

Indianapolis 500 (*Electronic Arts): As producer of Indianapolis 500*, Randy Breen set out to model the Indianapolis Motor Speedway by using the same kind of polygon-fill graphics as those used in flight simulators. Where many driving/racing simulations simply put the player behind the wheel, *Indianapolis 500* allows eight different systems on each car to be adjusted and saved for later use; the "Instant Replay" feature provides six different camera angles (to

(Continued on page 78)


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(Continued from page 76)



FaceOff



Indianapolis 500



It Came From The Desert



The King's Bounty



Lakers vs. Celtics



Their Finest Hour

view the last 20 seconds or save it for future viewing); and offers color (from 16 color VGA to 4 color CGA) and sound support (*AdLib, Roland,* and *Tandy*) for any budget. With variable race lengths, plenty of chrome, and smooth animation, the game should be an ideal purchase for any motor sports fan. IBM with 384K ($49.95).

It Came From The Desert (*Cinemaware*): This action/adventure game based on the "B" movie horror genre was developed for two basic reasons. First, David Riordan (Cinemaware's interactive guru) was always a fan of the genre and lobbied to create the game. Second, *It Came From The Desert* was perceived as an ideal vehicle for porting into the new interactive technologies (it would translate quickly into a video format). It is distinctive because it has the best digitized sound and graphics to date in a Cinemaware product and features a story by an actual screenwriter. With eight arcade sequences (the most ever in a Cinemaware product) on three disks, this product has the potential to be a real holiday treat for experienced computer gamers, as well as new Amiga owners who would like a new showcase product. Amiga ($49.95).

Lakers vs. Celtics (*Electronic Arts*): The initial attraction for the producer of *Lakers vs. Celtics*, Don Traeger, was the deep, historical rivalry between the Los Angeles Lakers and the Boston Celtics. "We almost looked at it as 'team one-on-one'," Traeger stated. Robert Weatherby, the designer, offered a simpler rationale, "We designed this game because we felt that all game players deserved a good action-oriented five-on-five basketball game for the IBM and compatibles." Both producer and designer believe the distinctiveness of the game rests in the custom graphics and moves for every player. The game should be an ideal present for the entire family because it's easy enough to play that anyone can enjoy it and makes a marvelous purchase for an NBA fan because, according to Weatherby, ". . . it lives and breathes the NBA style of play." IBM ($49.95).

Their Finest Hour (*Lucasfilm*): Larry Holland, designer of *Their Finest Hour*, became involved with computer games like *Strike Fleet* and *Battlehawks: 1942* because he liked wargames. He wanted to be able to put the player in the middle of one. Indeed, he has been successful in the past and the simulated Spitfires, Hurricanes Dorniers, Messerschmitts, and Junkers in *Their Finest Hour* look like he has succeeded once again. Bob Reynolds, former WWII pilot with the R.A.F., told *CGW* that the way the plane handled in the computer game was extremely realistic, particularly in terms of fuel consumption and ability to gain altitude. As a sequel to *Battlehawks: 1942*, *Their Finest Hour* continues the tradition of offering cinematic replay features, detailed manuals, pilot service records, and marvelous audio-visual (hi-res bit mapped planes and *AdLib* support). *Their Finest Hour* is an appropriate gift because it offers a "hands-on" look at history wrapped colorfully in an entertainment product. Amiga, Atari ST, and IBM ($59.95).

The King's Bounty (*New World*): At New World Computing, the design team wanted a game where they could actively control the monsters they had previously only fought. In *The King's Bounty*, the team created a fantasy game which combines strategy and tactics in an fresh, new adventure format. As a noble, the player uses his power and prestige to raise large armies of monsters and men to do his bidding. *The King's Bounty* with its quest to return the Sceptre of Order to its rightful owner is an interesting gift idea for the action/adventure fan who has everything. Apple II with 128K ($39.95).

Wayne Gretzky Hockey (*Bethesda*): Chris Weaver and the designers of *Wayne Gretzky Hockey* have developed their dream game, complete with the assistance of their hockey heroes. Hockey talents such as Wayne Gretzky, Pete Peeters, Doug Carpenter, and others helped to create the model for this game. A sophisticated statistical data base, realistic artificial intelligence routines, impressive graphic perspective and ability to play as coach, player coach, or player make this an outstanding game. *CGW* loved *Wayne Gretzky Hockey* on the Amiga and the only thing missing on the IBM is the digitized sound. *Wayne Gretzky Hockey* could thaw out the coldest Christmas morning. Amiga and IBM ($54.95).

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(Continued from page 78)



Wayne Gretzky Hockey



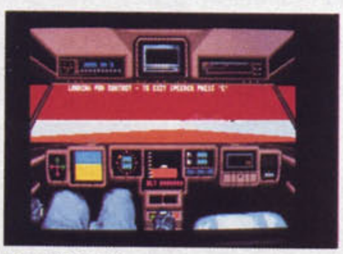
Breach 2



The Colonel's Bequest



David Wolf: Secret Agent



Mean Streets

Adventure

Breach 2 (*Omnitrend*): Tom Carbone and Bill Leslie, the design team for *Breach 2* felt that *Breach* fans would be ready for an enhanced version of the game which would take advantage of today's higher resolution graphics and sound capabilities (supporting *AdLib*, *CMS*, and possibly other sound boards). The sequel is a more involved and corn-plex strategy/adventure game than the original, but actually ends up being easier to play and more enjoyable due to an improved interface. While it retains complexity in terms of strategy, the interface makes it much more enjoyable and accessible than traditional strategy games. With challenging game play and an editor for scenario development, *Breach 2* is an ideal holiday package for strategy/adventure gamers because it has potential for long life. Amiga, Atari ST and IBM ($49.95).

The Colonel's Bequest (*Sierra*): Roberta Williams, designer of *The Colonel's Bequest*, has always enjoyed mystery stories. Since *Mystery House*, her very first game, was a mystery, this new adventure is something of a return to her roots. Besides the beautiful Sierra graphics and soundtrack we have come to expect as standard, *The Colonel's Bequest* also sports the distinction of having a female protagonist, a young college coed during the Roaring '20s. Mystery lovers and nostalgia fans would love to find *The Colonel's Bequest* under their tree. After all, isn't nostalgia part of the fun of the holidays? Atari ST and IBM ($59.95).

David Wolf: Secret Agent (*Dynamix*): In *David Wolf: Secret Agent*, the design team wanted to tell a story while creating a piece of entertainment software that is accessible for the mass market. In doing so, the game created its own genre. With digitized graphics, 3-D animations, 4 complete 3-D simulations, an interactive and changing storyline, realistic characters and the new VCR Interfact™, there really hasn't been anything like it to date. Because of the ease of play, interesting storyline, and incredible graphics, *David Wolf: Secret Agent* should be a gift that won't soon be forgotten, a high-quality piece of software that won't sit on the shelf collecting dust. IBM ($49.95).

Mean Streets (*Access*): The folks at Access designed *Mean Streets* to take full advantage of two technological breakthroughs: 256 color VGA and Real-Sound (the company's proprietary sound technology which allows MS-DOS computers to play digitized sound effects, music, and speech without additional hardware). The design team felt that because many programs which call themselves interactive movies do not offer real character development and a definitive plot line, they could carve out a product where murder, politics, double-dealing and revenge are all mixed together in an interactive murder mystery. According to Access' Kevin Jones, the discriminating software buyer who is looking for an exciting challenge combined with the best in digitized sound and graphics will find *Mean Streets* to be outstanding holiday entertainment. IBM ($59.95).

Star Trek V: The Final Frontier (*Mindscape*): Since several members of the Mindscape staff are *Star Trek* fans, there has always been a desire to create a distinctive game based on the series. The rights to the movie, *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier*, were acquired and the designers have developed a game which mixes arcade-type sequences, a flight simulator-style routine, and elements of adventure games. With photo-quality graphics in 256 color VGA, as well as *AdLib* sound support (among others), the game will make an attractive gift which will not only impress one's friends, but allow the recipients to enjoy challenging entertainment well into 1990. IBM with 512K and EGA or VGA ($49.95).

Sword of the Samurai (*Microprose*): After the success of *Pirates!*, Lawrence Schick wanted to employ the basic "graphic window and text menu" interface from that game into a role-playing experience which would introduce the culture of feudal Japan to occidental gamers. This game would offer more, however, because the computer opponents would act intelligently; the players would fight real-time battles; and an atmosphere built on Japanese-style music and art. *Sword of the Samurai* is the game he envisioned and that makes it an ideal gift selection for those who want action, adventure, and role-playing all rolled into one game. IBM ($54.95).

Wargames

Napoleon at Austerlitz (*Tevex*): The folks at Tevex are used to selling games,

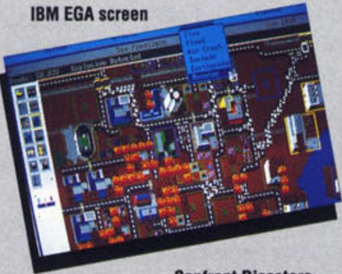
(Continued on page 82)

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(These comments are from the correspondence from real SimCity users. ***Honest!***)



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(Continued from page 80)



Star Trek V



Sword of the Samurai



Napoleon at Austerlitz



Harpoon



Rommel

but they were so concerned about the minimal number of wargame titles available on computers that they decided to publish their own. *Napoleon at Austerlitz* has a look reminiscent of *Napoleon in Russia: Borodino* (originally from **Krentek**; later, from **Datasoft**) and offers the same type of sophisticated strategy in a new scenario. It should be a fascinating addition to the "Wargamer's Holiday Wish List" because it is primarily a familiar system. IBM ($34.95).

Battles of Napoleon (*Strategic Simulations, Inc.*): *CGW*'s **Wargame of the Year for 1989**, this new IBM conversion (not pictured) should be a very welcome addition under the tree. Chuck Kroegel and David Landrey developed *Battles of Napoleon* to meet the public demand for a Napoleonic era computer game. The design is distinctive in that it is patterned after miniatures and actually captures the essence and tactical feel of Napoleonic warfare, particularly the interaction between cavalry, infantry and artillery. Further, unlike some design philosophies, it allows the player to have total control of all aspects of a given battle. It is distinctive from the award-winning Apple and C-64 versions in that it offers improved graphics and a mouse interface. IBM owners interested in the Napoleonic era should welcome *Battles of Napoleon* as a gift. Apple, C-64, IBM ($49.95)

Harpoon (*Three-Sixty*): When Tom Frisina first approached *CGW* with his intent to publish *Harpoon*, he expressed his desire to make the product deep enough that it would challenge our readers for a long time to come and accessible enough that it would engage new gamers in conflict simulations. He felt like the massive database of information on ships, planes, and 110 different weapons systems, along with expert commentary provided by defense consultant Larry Bond, would educate the gamers who played *Harpoon*, yet he believed that the simulation of modern naval warfare would offer tremendous entertainment potential, as well. The use of the Staff Assistant function, multiple levels of difficulty, and use of actual military symbology should make *Harpoon* a stimulating surprise for even the most demanding gamer. IBM ($39.95)

Main Battle Tank: Central Germany (*Simulations Canada*): At Simulations Canada, the goal in game design is not to create glitzy graphics and incredible sound. Rather, the design team is composed of students of history who believe in doing extensive research and developing simulations from a command perspective out of that research. The *Main Battle Tank* series is distinctive from some of the earlier SimCan titles in that it saves the data and allows the player to review the scenario via a special post mortem feature. *Main Battle Tank: Central Germany* (not pictured) is the first in a series that will place the player in the role of a commander of a regiment/brigade or battalion of modern armor during a future combat. It is an ideal purchase on behalf of the gamer who wants a command perspective complete with the uncertainty of limited intelligence. Amiga, Apple II, Atari ST and IBM ($60.00).

Rommel: Battles for North Africa (*Strategic Studies Group*): *Rommel: Battles for North Africa* may be the best application of the *Battlefront* system ever created. The desert war with all its vagaries is the ideal subject matter for SSG's system which stress command perspective and limited intelligence. The IBM version with EGA graphics and faster play makes the game even better. Ian Trout and Roger Keating expressed concern to *CGW* that the market for pure wargames seemed to be softening at an alarming pace. Therefore, one of the reasons for new IBM versions with new, more attractive graphics is to draw new gamers into wargames. With both the beauty of the graphics and the grace of the system, *Rommel: Battles for North Africa* offers an ideal holiday package for the computer gamer seeking a new challenge. Apple II, C-64, and IBM ($39.95).

And To All A Good New Year

Whether your holiday tradition involves Christmas, Hannukah, or Saturnalia, the computer games to be released between this issue's press time and the gift-giving season offer something of interest to any gamer. This year's crop looks like the new games will offer more substance than tinsel, and may be the most exciting hint list we've published yet. That's how it should be, of course, and that means gamers can look forward to an exciting new year, as well. So, in the words of a certain chubby elf in red pajamas (or a villainous looking fiend on a certain magazine cover), "Ho! Ho! Ho! Merry Christmas!" **CGW**



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The King's Quest Companion

ences and, in addition to defining the item/individual listing in terms of the game's fiction, brings in a wealth of folklore to enrich the discussion. The following is a typical listing in the Encyclopedia which demonstrates the technique.

Frog Prince: (KQ4) There are some interesting differences between Rosella's encounter with her Frog prince, and the tale that is told in this world. It seems that the beautiful daughter of a king was sitting under a cool tree, passing time and playing a game of catch with herself using a little golden ball. As these things happen, the ball this day travelled too far and dropped past her hands and down into a deep well, too far down for her to retrieve it. As she wept for her lost ball, a frog's head came out of the water and the creature offered to dive and bring the ball back to her. There were conditions, though—in return for the ball, the princess must accept the ugly frog as her companion and play-mate, and it must be allowed to eat from her plate with her at the dinner table, drink from her cup, and sleep with her in her bed. The pretty princess accepted the frog's bargain, but as soon as she held the golden ball again in her hands, she ran away and deserted the frog.

The next day, as the princess ate with her family and their entire court, a small voice came to the door and demanded the princess let him in—it was the frog, of course. Her father, the king, asked her what the frog wanted, and she was forced to tell him of her promise to the little green one. The king informed the girl that she must fulfill all that she had promised the frog, and bade it join them for supper. She was reluctant and unwilling, but the king pushed her plate and cup closer to the frog so that it could enjoy the meal. When the meal was finished, the frog announced that he was tired, and asked the princess to join him in going to sleep. She didn't want any dirty old frog in her clean bed, but her father demanded that she honor her promise.

The princess carried the frog to her room, but when it was time to get into bed, she picked it up and threw it against one of the walls of her chamber as hard as she could. All at once, instead of dying, the ugly frog transformed into a handsome young prince who informed her that he had been captive of a wicked witch's spell. Instead of being upset at the girl for what she had done, he asked her to marry him, which she did. They lived happily ever after.

Most people, I suspect, recall a version of the tale where the princess kisses the frog to transform him. The first version of the tale, however, is the authentic one.

The Final Score

The final section of The King's Quest Companion, *"The Final Score", offers a point-by-point list of how to get the maximum score in each of the* King's Quest *adventures. A final comment on the book itself must be that* The King's Quest Companion *is more than a hint book and more than a reference work, it is . . . well, a* companion. *We suggest that readers will get even more out of the fine adventure series if they play the games (or replay them) with this book beside them.* **CGW**

Origin/CGW Omega Tournament

Origin/CGW Omega Tournament Report



AUSTIN (CGW) -- NIMBUS1, designed by Bob Willis of Silver Spring, Maryland has won the September Origin/CGW Omega Tournament. NIMBUS1, along with five other tanks, survived a crowded field of 39 entrants to reach the finals of the monthly tournament. Tournament officials described NIMBUS1 as "persistent". He "manages his system repairs very efficiently". Other finalists included SAMURAI ("sneaky. Lurks in hiding then pounces."); SWAN ("Cool and cautious. Responds well to simultaneous attacks"); TT1 ("Uses defensive tactics to his advantage"); CHAOS ("Extremely methodical in his stalking"); and STRIKER ("Lives up to his name: aggressive.").

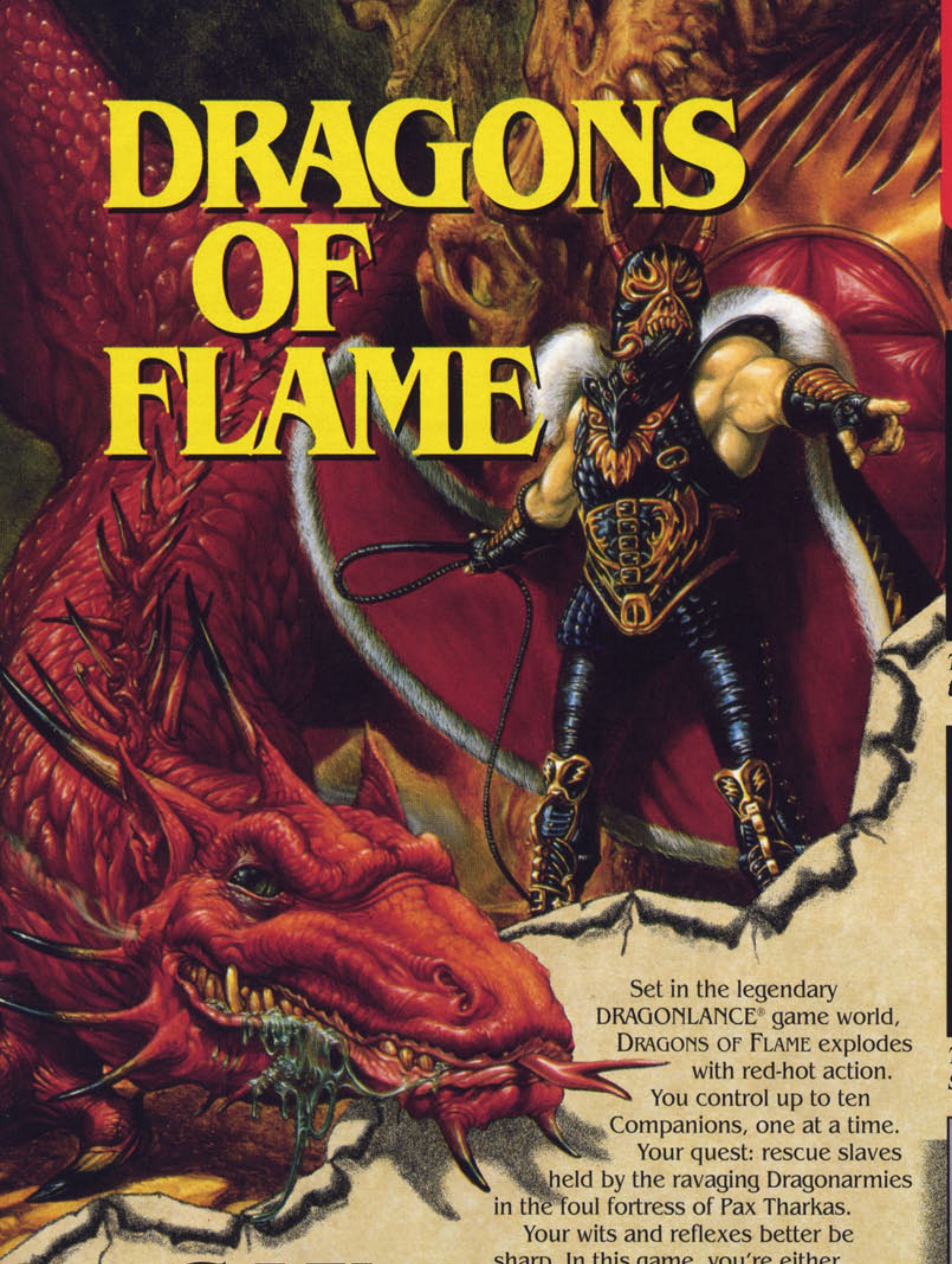
The following are comments from Omega Author Stuart Marks Concerning the September Tournament:

It was exciting to see all of the tanks duking it out trying to make it to the final round of six tanks, and even more exciting to actually see the final round. Glued to the computer screen I tried to decipher how each tank was working.

The original field of 39 was reduced to six. At the start of the final round all of the tanks roamed around the battlefield trying to find easy prey, although none of those left in the tournament could be considered "easy prey". SAMURAI would hide behind obstacles waiting for his mark to come slowly creeping by, fire off a couple of shots, then scamper off towards a different obstacle. This was an amazing strategy. However, NIMBUS1 was not impressed. Catching onto SAMURAI's little trick, NIMBUS1 simply took on the other tanks before SAMURAI could get to them. It was indeed impressive to see these tanks trying to outsmart one another. Only a few times did finesse give way to a slugfest.

During the final round, many an OSI employee huddled around the computer screen to watch the battles and see would be crowned "Champ". As laughter and excitement filled the air, not one person could take their eyes off the screen. When it was all said and done and the dust had settled, everyone looked at one another and said, "Wow! When is the next tournament? I can't wait!"

Notice: The tournament flyers in the OMEGA box mention that the deadline to enter the tournament is January 31, 1990. That is true, but doesn't tell the whole story. In reality there will be five monthly tournaments. NIMBUS1 has won the September tournament. Entries for the October, November, and December tournaments must be received by 9:00 AM on the 28th of the month. In other words, the deadline for entering the November tournament is 9 AM on November 28. The deadline for the January monthly tournament (in keeping with the printed flyer in the game) will be 9 AM January 31, 1990. The six finalists from each of the monthly tournaments will be allowed to submit tanks in the Championship Round to be held next February. The results of the Championship Round will be reported in the *April* issue of CGW (rather than the March issue as previously announced).



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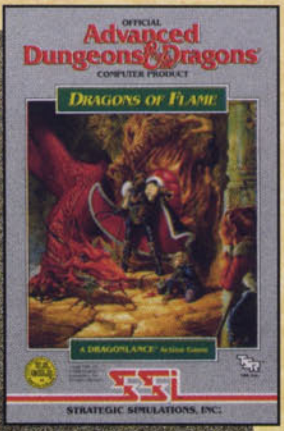
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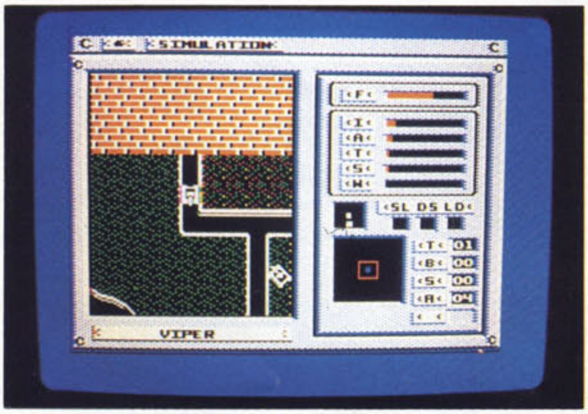
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(Continued from page 52)

OMEGA

Neural Cybertank Design and Simulation

complishing the tasks at hand with the least number of cycles. Every action you instruct your tank to perform requires time (measured as cycles). For example moving the tank forward requires 40 cycles, turning requires 16 cycles, firing weapon requires 40 cycles, scanning requires 8 cycles, executing a logic command such as an IF THEN argument requires 1 cycle. Smart programmers will realize that removing



one fire weapon command will allow your tank to do A LOT of thinking in the same time span.

- Getting in the first shot is often critical to winning the battle. To accomplish this Steve Cantrell (Omega playtester and documentation editor) suggests that you include a routine that stops your robot five squares from the enemy (Omega weapon range is four squares). The enemy tends to walk into your range and you can usually get in the first shot.

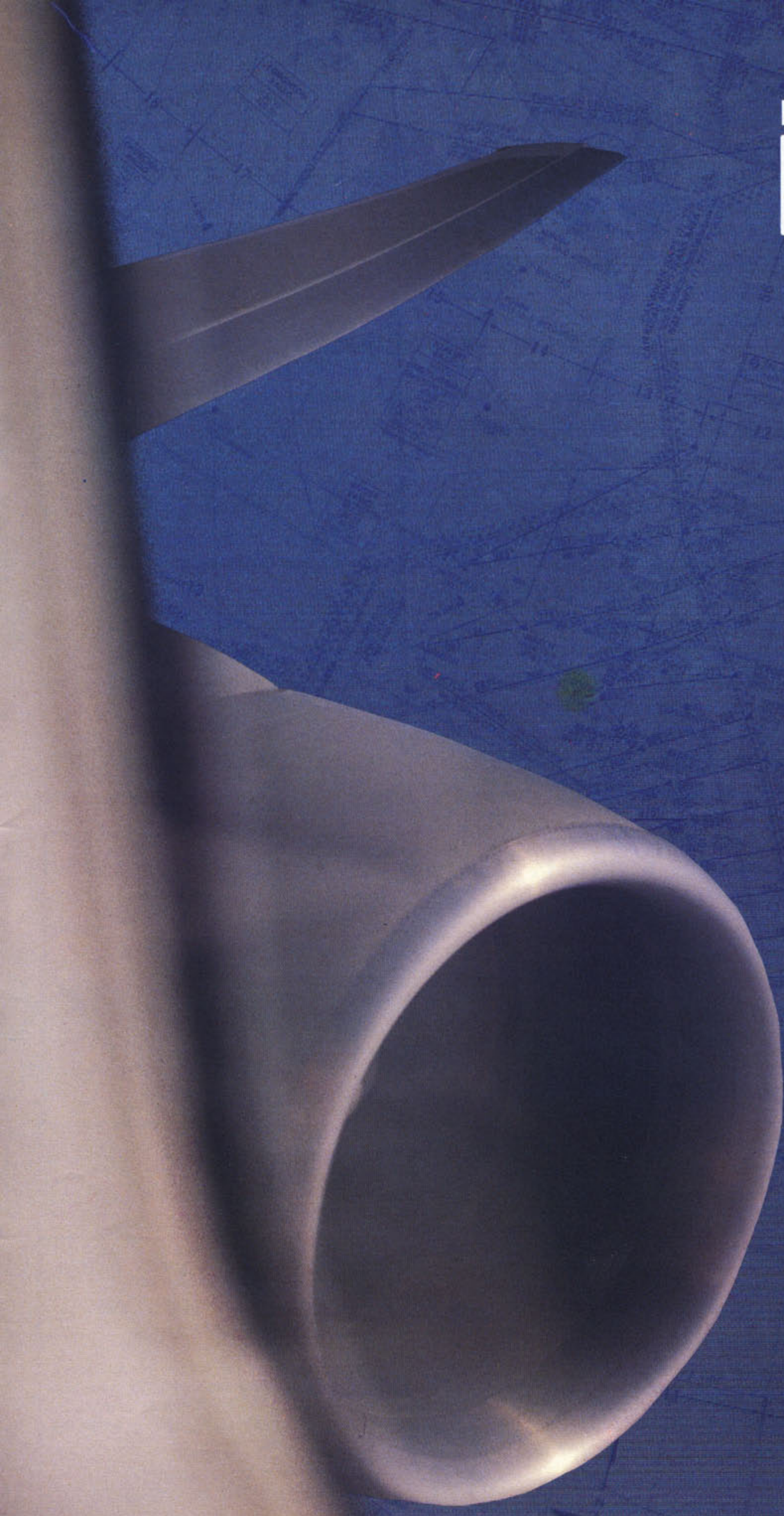
- Jeff Hillhouse (Omega Associate Supervisor) suggests that when your tank is damaged, have it fire once. Then, back up a square. Have it fire and backup again. Do this until you reach the maximum fire range. Most rookie designers will string too many fire commands in a row. As they face more sophisticated robots they will find that they are firing on empty space. Good robots *move* when hit.

- As a variant of the shoot-backup technique, you might try a shot and circle technique. Be sure to use "jamming" to negate "scan lock" if you plan to circle in close.

- Don't worry about saving up for the Nuke weapon. Its cost is not worth what it delivers. A much better "buy" is the quick and efficient Turbo-Laser.

- Never assume a "scan lock" will be effective. Jammers and obstacles such as building and trees can cause you to lose the lock.

(Continued on page 90)



FLIGHT SIMULATOR: A.T.P.

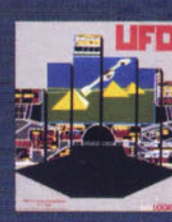
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And don't forget UFO...when reality just isn't enough!

(Continued from page 75)

INDIANA JONES and the LAST CRUSADE

Playing Tips

Warning: There are specific hints in this section. Readers who wish to solve the puzzles without help should avoid reading these playing tips.

One thing which hasn't improved since *Maniac Mansion* is cursor control. You still have to fight with the crosshairs to get them centered on small objects. The fight's worth sticking out in two places: with the skeletons in the catacombs (you get the hook-arm) and on the third floor of Schloss Brunwald (you get a silver key off a candelabra).

There are two "ordering" puzzles, for which you must consult the on-screen Grail Diary: the three statues and the six skulls, both in the catacombs. For the statues, the order to push is right, left, center; for the skulls it's left to right (skulls) equals top to bottom (musical notes).

To choose the correct Grail at the end, pay special attention to the inscriptions past the bridge and the painting in the vault.

Hitler will sign anything you hand him short of your whip. Consider where his name will do you the most good.

Yes, you can steal the biplane—if you're quick. Flick the six switches on the right, go up and click on the guage (it will turn green), click twice on the 'L-R-B' dial, pull the pump handle three times (you'll have to click six times), go to the left and click on the throttle, then go back to the right and press the red button.

If you're not fast enough, you'd better be prepared with blimp tickets! You don't have enough money to buy them—so, you'll have to pick a pocket or two, boys . . .

In Brunwald, remember which guards saw you in which disguise. If they see you dressed differently later, they'll be on you in an instant.

In the Temple, you don't have to spell the Name of God in order. Any tile whose letter is contained in the Name is safe.

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RVF Honda	28
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HARDWARE

FTN Turbo XT 2-5 1/4 drives	$850
FTN Turbo XT 20 MEG HD	$1100
FTN 286/12 20 MEG HD	$1300
FTN 286/12 40 MEG HD	$1500
Optional Add-ons	
Small Wonder VGA card	$230
Gold Star VGA monitor	$250
Magnovox EGA monitor (9CM053)	$360
MS Dos 3.3	$70

NEW or SOON TO BE RELEASED

IBM
Battles Napoleon
Carrier Command
Deathbringer
Delux Paint II Enhanced
Demon's Tomb
Dragons of Flame
F-16 Combat Pilot
Federation
Fire King
Formula 1 Simulation
Harpoon
Keef the Thief
Lakers vs Celtics
M1 Tank Platoon
Madden Football
Starglider II
Sword of Samurai
Their Finest Hour
TV Sports Football
Twilight 2000
Typhoon of Steel

AMIGA
Chess 2100
Dragon Force
F-19 Stealth Fighter
Federation
It Came from the Desert
Life & Death
Might & Magic II
Monopoly
Nuclear War
Pool of Radiance
Star Command
Stellar Crusade
Swords of Twilight
Their Finest Hour
Weird Dreams

APPLE
Curse Azure Bonds
Keys to Marmonte
King's Bounty
Panzer Battles
War of the Lance

ST
Aargh!
Dragon Force
Federation
Hillsfar
Indiana Jones: Adven
Powerdrome
Rick Dangerous
Star Command

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(Continued from page 86)

OMEGA

Neural Cybertank Design and Simulation

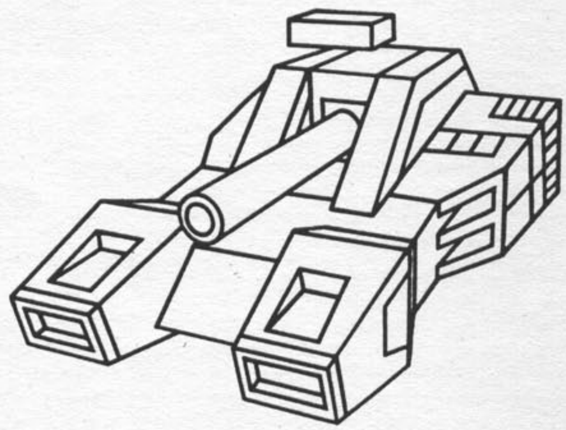
• Special devices are not of great value to less than expert designers. Beginners and intermediate designers tend to waste valuable cycles using the devices inefficiently.

• Despite what the documentation suggests, sitting and waiting is not as effective as you might think. (In the Origin/CGW Tournament it is a sure way to lose). Sitting and scanning can use as much, or even more, fuel than scanning and moving (it depends on your routines).

Final Analysis

As wonderful as *Omega* is — it is not for everyone. This is a game that will require thoughtful design work on the part of the player. The massive 250+ page manual will have to be read nearly in its entirety to get the most out of the game (although you can get by with less and still have a lot of fun). To those of us that are willing to spend the time, *Omega* will reward the effort most handsomely. *Omega* is the kind of game that is sure to develop the same kind of dedicated following that *Robotwar* had. It's release has been anxiously awaited around the offices of CGW. It is a real winner.

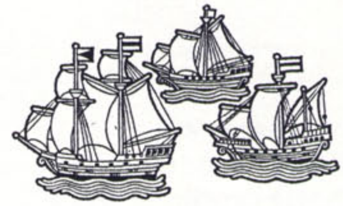
The review was finished. The file was saved. The editor called in the gang. They crowded around the monitor as the editor loaded up the robots for the next battle. **CGW**



(Continued from page 14)

Over There

Wargames and More



The game displays excellent graphics along with some atmospheric digitized sound (which includes some realistic-sounding "alien" speech from the Protozorqs). The game centers around a group of separate puzzles which take place within different rooms in the game. Solving each puzzle presents you with an object which furthers your quest. *Kult* is totally icon driven and is available now.

Personal Nightmare (Amiga & ST—available now) comes from the new UK adventure house, **Horrorsoft**. You play a Vicar's son who returns to his home, in the sleepy village of Tynham Cross, in response to a suspicious call from his mother. As the son, you hear news of the strange behavior of your father, notice convenient accidents occurring, and end up meeting some rather unsavory characters. Everyone encourages tourism in the village but just who invited the Vampires and the Hell-Hounds? *Personal Nightmare* includes 500 sequences of animation and 600K of digitized sound. The game allows on-screen graphics to be manipulated within the real-time world. It is designed under **Horrorsoft**'s specially written system.

Finally, a few snippets. **Electronic Arts** plans a scenario disk for the highly popular *Populous* which will contain a variety of extra worlds. French software house, **Infogrames**, has released a new graphic adventure - *Quest For The Time Bird*. **Coktel Visions** has two interesting games on the way, *The Legend Of Djel*, a fantasy graphic adventure with integrated puzzles serving as combat routines and *European Space Shuttle* which looks to be evolving along the lines of *Space M+A+X*.

All of the above are, or will be, available from the following UK mail-order retailers. All telephone numbers included assume you can dial direct. If you are in any doubt please contact the International Operator.

COMPUTER ADVENTURE WORLD, BANK BUILDINGS, 1A CHARING CROSS, BIRKENHEAD, ENGLAND, L41 6EJ. TEL: 01144 51 666 1132.

CASTLE SOFTWARE, 2 WILLIAM CLOWES ST., BURSLEM, STOKE-ON-TRENT, ENGLAND. TEL: 01144 782 575043.

SDC, 60 BOSTON RD., LONDON, ENGLAND, W7 3TR. TEL: 01144 1 567 7621. **CGW**

(Continued from page 6)

this action game developed by US Gold. C-64 ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #4.

Mindscape
3444 Dundee Road
Northbrook, Il 60062

AFTER BURNER: another one for the "Top-Gun" fan. In this action game players fly a F-14 Thunder Cat against a whole fleet of Migs. Fire the Vulcan 20mm cannon, lock on the air-to-air missiles, and barrel-roll to avoid the same. If they survive the early rounds, players will maneuver through canyons, dodge kamikazes, and battle flying fortresses. IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #5.

SHINOBI: Straight from the scenes of Kung Fu theater, this action game puts players in the slippers of a Ninja warrior. The cast of "bad dudes" includes a host of nunchuka bearing, fire breathing, and shurikan flinging terrorists. To survive, players use the usual combination of martial arts' moves, ninja weaponry, magic, and, of course, "deesapline, grasshoppa". C-64 ($34.95). Circle Reader Service #6.

Origin
136-B Harvey Road
Londonderry, NH 03053

SPACE ROGUE: This unique hybrid combines a 3-D flight simulator with an "Ultima-style" role playing adventure. Players earn a living as a pirate, merchant, or bounty hunter, while slowly becoming involved in adventures that involve assassination plots, intergalactic warfare, and all sorts of political intrigue. A nice blend of action and adventure that yields surprisingly balanced play. IBM (pictured), C-64 & Apple II ($49.95). Circle Reader Service # 7.

Sierra
P.O. Box 485
Coarsegold, CA 93614

HOYLE'S BOOK OF GAMES: **Sierra** provides the player with 18 variably-rated opponents for a "friendly evening" of cardplay. Six games to choose from (Cribbage, Crazy 8's, Gin Rummy, Hearts, Klondike Solitaire, and Old Maid), rules for each game, and wisecracking opponents make up a package designed for the whole family. IBM ($34.95) Circle Reader Service #8.

Software Toolworks
19808 Nordhoff Place
Chatsworth, CA 91311

BEYOND THE BLACK HOLE: Three-D comics, movies, TV commercials, and now computer games. While this product does sport 3-D visual effects, (paper glasses are included), the actual action game is another souped-up variation on the paddle and ball system. The game consists of 35 levels of this Pong-like action, and the packaging contains a book on the history of stereoscopic 3-D. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #9.



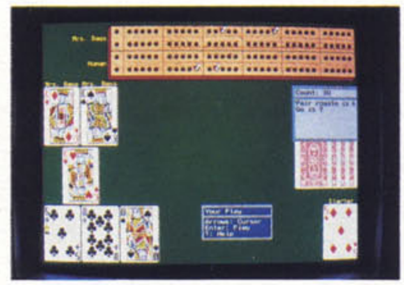
Space Rogue



Hoyle's Book of Games



Beyond the Black Hole



Cribbage King/Gin King



Dungeon Masters Assistant



Storm Across Europe

CRIBBAGE KING/GIN KING: Seven different computer opponents match wits with players in two of the more popular card games. Billed as the world's strongest computer opponents in each game, the package also has on-line hints, scenario analyzers, and a duplicate mode for replay using the same cards. "If at first you don't succeed...". IBM ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #10.

Strategic Simulations
675 Almanor Ave.,
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

AD&D DUNGEON MASTERS ASSISTANT, VOL. II: CHARACTERS & TREASURES: This utility package allows time-pressured DMs to generate detailed player or non-player characters and large treasure hoards. The program creates the info requested on ready-made character sheets that can then be printed for instant use. C-64 (pictured) & Apple II ($29.95). Circle Reader Service #11.

STORM ACROSS EUROPE: One to three players fight across Europe in this grand strategic wargame created by the

(Continued on page 94)

(Continued from page 69)

Bandit Kings of Ancient China

dimension beyond that found in *Bandit Kings*' predecessors.

Something Contagious

Bandit Kings is an extremely addictive experience. In some ways, it is a more forgiving program than the earlier games. Where players had to continually fortify the front lines in the earlier games, the watchword of *Bandit Kings* is expand, expand, expand. This is often revealed to the player by the prospective heroes to be recruited.

One can function quite effectively in *Bandit Kings* by settling a prefecture; building the economy until it passes the public support level of 40 (at which time one's efforts in the business sector begins to pay annual dividends in gold and food); swearing brotherhood to a subordinate; leaving a small garrison behind; and moving to the next empty (or weakly defended) prefecture. If a sworn brother controls a prefecture, the player can direct every month's activities. Even if an ordinary subordinate controls a prefecture, however, the player can issue general orders which will determine whether the subordinate should try to build up the territory or attempt to conquer another one as soon as possible.



One particular advantage of having sworn brothers in command of several different prefectures is that once the player reaches the mid-game, the intelligence to be garnered from the sworn brother is invaluable. Normally, if one wants to view a prefecture which is not controlled by the player, it costs a full game month's worth of activity (i.e. one's entire turn). With a sworn brother controlling a territory where there isn't much action, the player can "spend" the smaller prefecture's activity on spying out the enemy. Using this method allows the player to both spy and attack on the same turn. In that manner, the computer opponent cannot usually build up his standing army between the time of the intelligence report and the attack (Note: It would be possible if the rotation happened to fall just right, but that is not as likely as if one spies on one turn and attacks the next).



Something for Everyone

(Sung to the tune of "Comedy, Tonight") "Hero and brother both gain a prefecture, something for everyone our strategy, tonight!" Pardon the play on an old comedy standard, but *Bandit Kings of Ancient China* offers the proverbial "something for everyone" except the dyed-in-the-wool arcade gamer. There are only a handful of games that this reviewer has ever played that have caused him to play into the wee small hours of the morning without realizing it. *Bandit Kings of Ancient China* is one of them. **CGW**

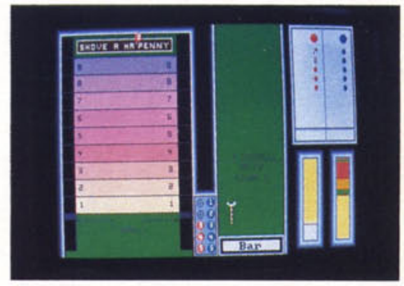
Circle Reader Service #67

(Continued from page 92)

Conversions Received



After Burner (Mindscape) C-64
Ancient Art of War (Broderbund) Apple IIe, IIC, IIGS
Archipelagos (Britannica) Amiga
Baal (Psygnosis) IBM
Blood Money (Psygnosis) ST
Curse of the Azure Bonds (SSI) Apple
The Duel (Accolade) Amiga
Falcon/Operation: Counterstrike (Spectrum Holobyte) ST & Amiga
Ferrari Formula One (EA) IBM
Gold Rush (Sierra) Mac
John Madden Football (EA) IBM
Manhunter 2 (Sierra) IBM, ST
Menace (Psygnosis) IBM
Might & Magic II (New World Computing) C-64
Operation Wolf (Taito) IBM
Populous (EA) ST
Shufflepuck Cafe (Broderbund) ST, Amiga
SimCity (Maxis) IBM
Star Wars (Broderbund) Mac
Universe 3 (Omnitrend) ST



Shuffle Mania!



Strike Force Navigator

designer of *Colonial Conquest*. Armies, paratroops, U-Boats, strategic bombers, raiding fleets, and amphibious troops all fight over limited resources in a game designed to be won or lost in an evening. C-64 ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #12.

XOR
7607 Bush Lake Road
Minneapolis, MN 55435

SHUFFLE MANIA!: Nine different shuffle games (including shuffleboard, bowling, & curling) come to the computer in this action game that allows play by one or two and an option for tournament play. Players can establish handicaps, enter up to 32 people in a tournament, or watch the computer play itself. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #13.

Advantage Ace
3542 Pheasant Run Ct, Ste. 8
Ann Arbor, MI 48108

STRIKE FORCE NAVIGATOR: This navigational tool can be used with any vehicle simulation game that comes with a map. It can be used to plot any path to any target, plot intercept courses, and determine enemy positions. Made of clear, flexible plastic, the Navigator comes with a handle and a 360 degree navigational compass printed on the face. The price is $7.95. Circle Reader Service #14.



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IBM 3-½" $39.99
Amiga $39.99
Atari ST $39.99
Commodore 64 $34.99
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On the R.I.D. card provided opposite page 8, please rate the following games (if you have played them) and articles (if you have read them) by using a letter grade scale (I.e. A to F). Just rate the games as if you were an educator. As with the world of education, the scale will translate to:

A= Excellent

B= Above Average

C= Average

D= Below Average

F= Failure

If you wish, you may assign pluses (+) or minuses (-) to your letter grade (i.e. B+, B-, C+, C-, etc.). As always, rate only those games that you have played.

Demographics

(List the appropriate number)

1. What is your age ?

1 = Under 14 years old
2 = 14-17 years old
3 = 18-20 years old
4 = 21-30 years old
5 = 31-35 years old
6 = 36-40 years old
7 = 41-50 years old
8 = 51+ years old

2. What machine(s) do you play games on?

(List all numbers that apply. List the machine you use most often first, the others in descending order of use).

1 = IBM, clones, Tandy
2 = Amiga
3 = Apple 8 bit
4 = Apple IIgs
5 = Atari ST
6 = Atari 8 bit
7 = C-64/128
8 = Macintosh
9 = Other (specify)

3. How much time do you typically spend playing computer games each week?

1 = Less than 2 hours
2 = 2-5 hours
3 = 6-10 hours
4 = 11-20 hours
5 = 21-30 hours
6 = 31+ hours

RID #65 Questions

Games

4. QIX (Taito)
5. Sim City (Maxis)
6. F-19 Stealth Fighter (Microprose)
7. Curse of Azure Bonds (SSI)
8. Lords of Rising Sun (Cinemaware)
9. Red Storm Rising (Microprose)
10. Overrun (SSI)
11. Battlehawks 1942 (Lucasfilm)
12. Battles of Napoleon (SSI)
13. Dragon Wars (Interplay)
14. Wasteland (Electronic Arts)
15. Ultima V (Origin)
16. Pool of Radiance (SSI)
17. Space Rogue (Origin)
18. Breach 2 (Omnitrend)
19. A-10 Tank Killer (Dynamix)
20. Omni-Play Horse Racing (SportTime)
21. Hero's Quest (Sierra)
22. Risk (Leisure Time Games)
23. Indiana Jones & Last Crusade The Action Game (Lucasfilm)
24. Omega (Origin)
25. Lakers vs. Celtics (EA)
26. After Burner (Mindscape)
27. Bandit Kings of Ancient China (Koei)
28. Mech Warrior (Activision)
29. Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego? (Broderbund)
30. Grave Yardage (Activision)
31. Their Finest Hour (Lucasfilm)
32. Falcon (Spectrum Holobyte)
33. Rocket Ranger (Cinemaware)
34. Sword of Aragon (SSI)
35. Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade The Graphic Adventure (Lucasfilm)
36. ABC Monday Night Football (Data East)
37. Vette! (Spectrum Holobyte)
38. Playmaker Football (Broderbund)
39. Chessmaster 2100 (Software Toolworks)
40. Star Fleet II (Interstel)

Articles

41. Christmas Buying Guide
42. Indiana Jones: The Graphic Adventure Review
43. Bandit Kings Review
44. Sword of Aragon Review
45. Don't Go Alone Review
46. Omega Review
47. Letters
48. Inside the Industry
49. Rumor Bag
50. Indiana Jones: The Action Game Review
51. King's Quest Companion Excerpts
52. Vulcan Review
53. Project Firestart Review
54. Editorial Page

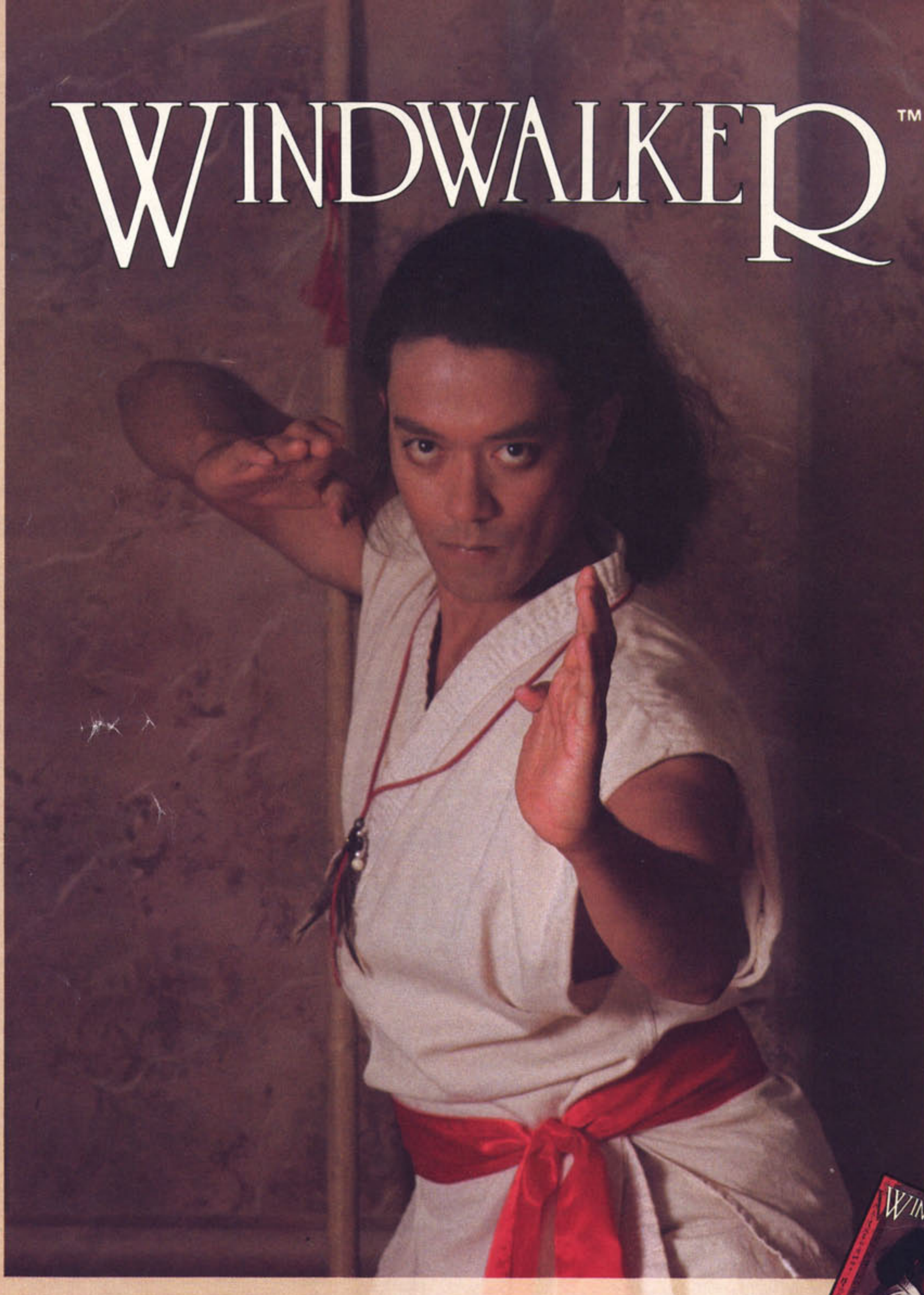
Questions

55. When are you most likely to mail in a warranty card for a new computer game? (Choose One):

a) If I like the product tremendously;
b) If I dislike the product tremendously;
c) Every time I purchase a game;
d) Whenever I remember; or
e) Never.

56. How important do you feel a feature which allowed a player to print out his/her game position at the end of each turn would be to your enjoyment of a strategy game for two or more players? Would you (Choose One):

a) Completely ignore the feature;
b) Be more likely to purchase the game;
c) Be more likely to play with another person; or
d) Print out the information occasionally as a novelty.





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